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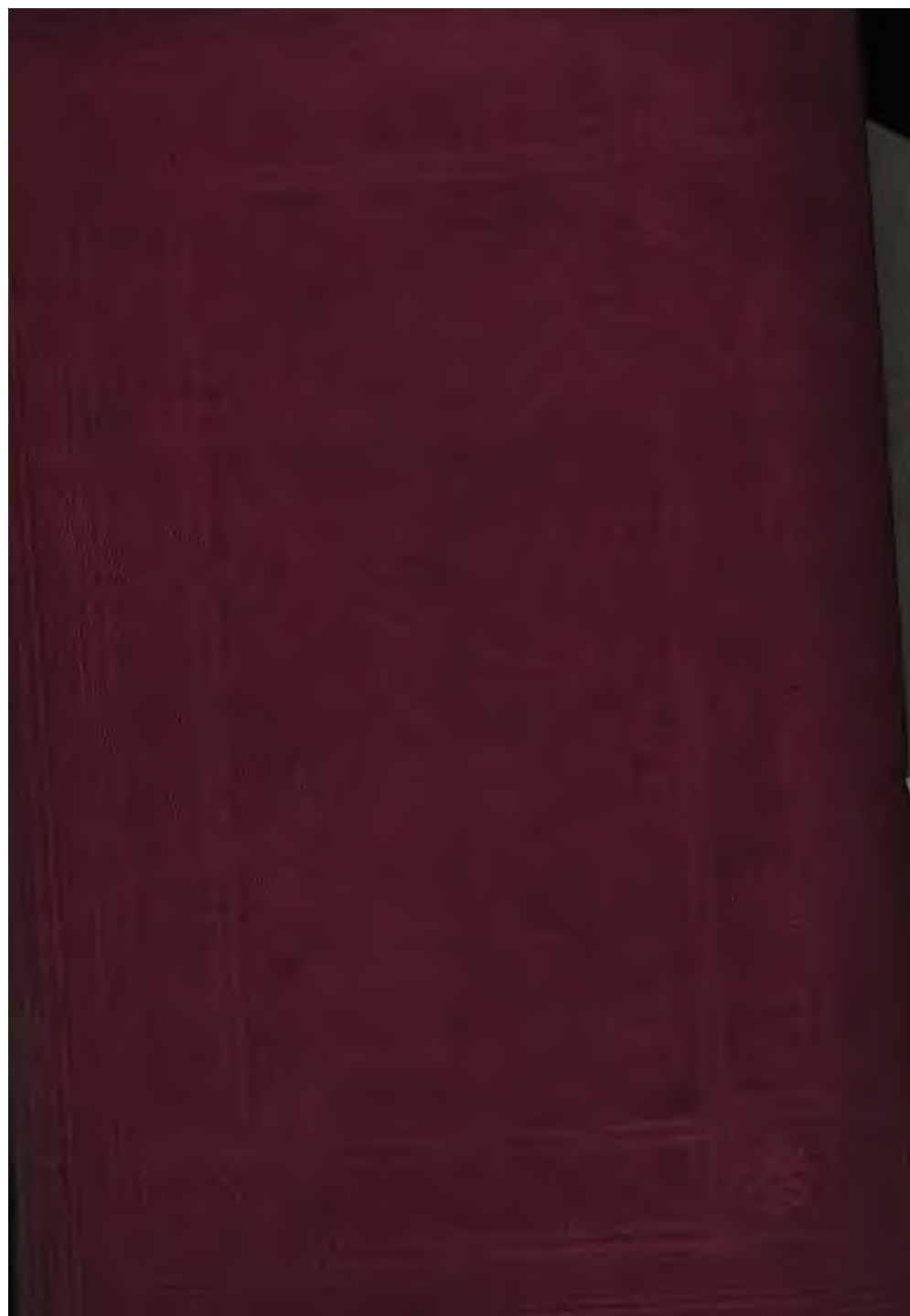
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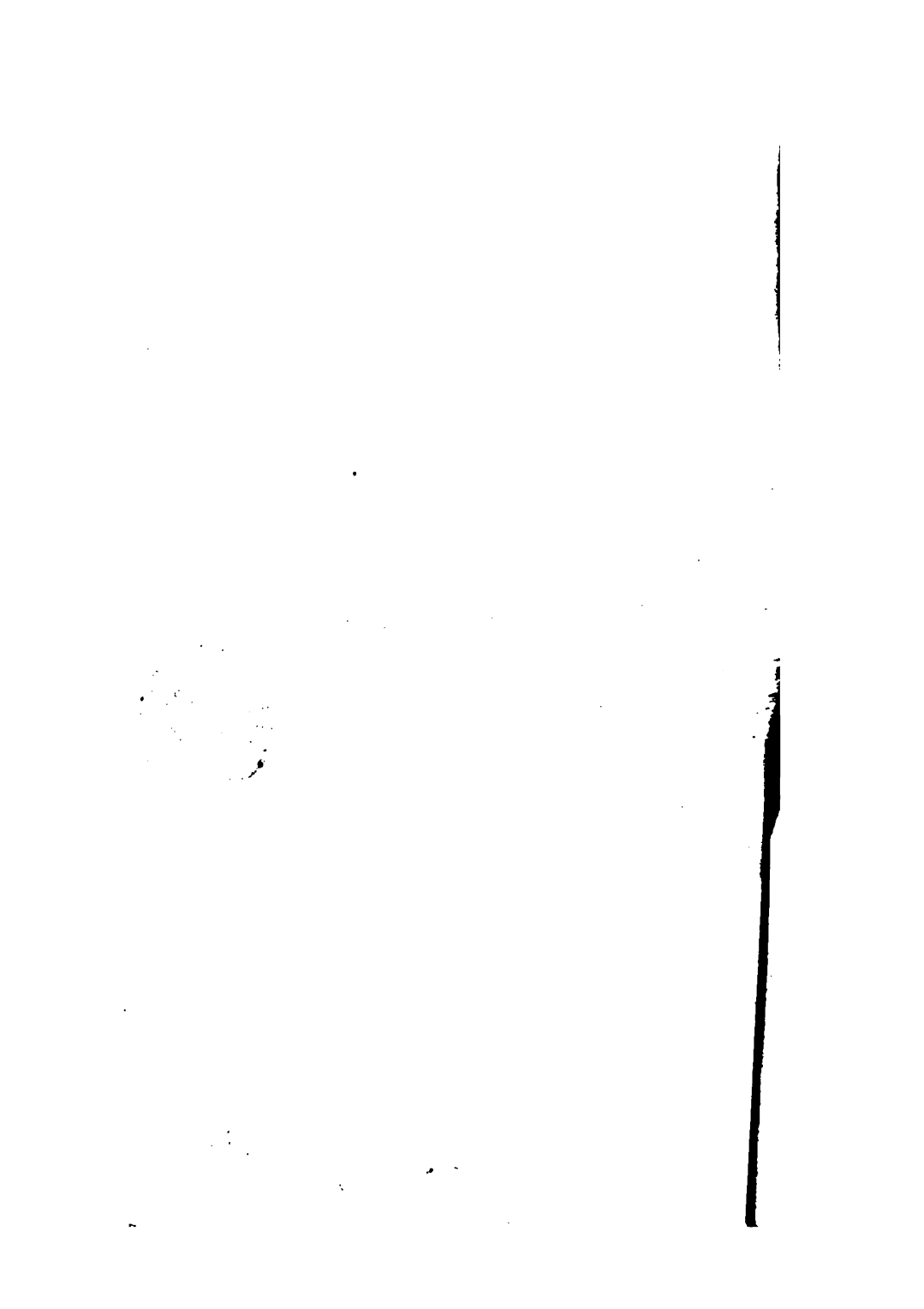
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BEYOND THESE VOICES.



BEYOND THESE VOICES.

A Novel.

By LORD DESART.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



LONDON:

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND

1870.

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Murphy, sitting down on a low chair beside her. "I can see discontent in your face."

"Why should I be unhappy, Father Murphy! I have all and more than all I ever longed for. The man I love is my husband. Why should I be unhappy?" She said this as if trying to reason with herself, as well as attempting to convince him.

He smiled. "The why, I know not; but that you *are* unhappy I am certain. You say the man you love is your husband. Yes. But do you not crave for something more? Does he return that love as he should?"

"What am I, Father, that I could dare——" began Kathleen, but the priest interrupted her.

"You are his wife, and as such you have a right to his confidence, if not to his love. You are his wife, and you have a right to demand that no third person should step between him and you. You have a right

BEYOND THESE VOICES.



asked Kathleen, as he paused. "God knows I love him as well, nay more, if possible, than I ever did. I would live for him, die for him, give up the world and more for his love. What can I do more?"

"What can you do more? Do you not see, my child, what is the reason of his absenting himself—of his coldness and neglect? Can you not easily guess to whose influence all this is due?"

"You mean his sister?" asked Kathleen.

"Yes. I mean his sister. She, and she alone, is the cause of your misery—for misery I know it is. Dillon is a warm-hearted, impulsive man, honest and true——"

"Oh yes, that he is!" put in Kathleen.

"But he's full of prejudice, and is a slave to habit. This sister has lived with him and dictated to him until he almost believes her thoughts his. You should have stepped in and freed him from his unconscious

thralldom. But you were frightened by her, and stood aloof. He is a man that needs a stronger mind than his to guide and direct, but you crouched down, showing nothing but love (a commodity that does not last, Kathleen), until he turned impatiently from you to her he had always consulted and obeyed. I know what your mind is, Kathleen, and I wondered. I have watched the progress of this woman's insidious scheming, and I pity you.”

“But what can I do?” cried Kathleen, starting up. “What can I do?”

The priest went to the window that looked out upon the flower-garden, and Kathleen stood at it with him.

“Do you see those two young ashes down there, on the left: those that are so close together?”

“Yes,” said Kathleen, wondering.

“They are too close together for both to grow. To save one is better than for the



two to become stunted and shapeless. Do you know what will be done?"

"One will be cut down," answered Kathleen.

"Yes; one will be cut down," repeated the priest, slowly, "to save the other. Do you see what I mean?"

"Scarcely," answered Kathleen. "You would not have me——"

"I would not have you do anything more than your duty. You want your husband's confidence and love? Miss Dillon is determined you shall not have them. Your life together here—the one who should be nothing, the mistress; and she who should rule, a cypher—must be miserable for both. One must go. It is for you to say which it shall be."

"No, no! Tom is so fond of Emily, and she is very good to me; except——"

"Yes, except; if it had not been for her you would be happy. You know it was

her intervention that prevented your going to London with your husband. It is, I *know* (no matter how), through her that your husband is losing fast all affection for you ; nay, is gradually beginning to hate the fate that joined him to you.”

“ Oh, no, Father,” cried Kathleen. “ He cannot do that. He cannot.” But her voice faltered, for something told her it was true : the priest was right.

Father Murphy resumed—

“ I did not say he did. I said he was beginning to have the feeling ; and with that woman by to foster it, it will soon grow strong enough. Besides, Kathleen my child, remember your oath—our Church. Is it a slight matter, think you, that you, chosen by Heaven, through me, for the mighty work of bringing a heretic to the true faith, should cast away your duty with scorn directly it clashes with your inclination ?

My child, you are young ; you are strong in your love for our Holy Church ; you have every prospect of being its benefactress ! What girl, from your class, could say that ? It is not much I ask of you. It is for your own welfare to rid your husband and your house of your bitterest enemy, and it is necessary, necessary I say, for the ends of the Church."

"But what——" began Kathleen, overcome by his reasoning.

"What would I advise? Ah, there I must leave it to your tact and wit. Believe me, Kathleen, you will never know a happy moment till she has gone. Quarrel with her: tell her you cannot both live here. Do anything you think best. You will promise?"

Kathleen paused as he stood before her and asked for her promise eagerly.

"I cannot promise—yet," she said.

"But you will think over what I have said?"

"Yes, I will—but——"

"No buts, Kathleen; the word was coined by the evil one. You shall answer me to-morrow." And saluting her with a sacerdotal kiss on the forehead—a kiss that made him, strong as he was, tremble like a girl when her lover first salutes her—he took his leave, smiling, as he calculated the success of his first visit.

"Well, are you thoroughly confessed?" asked Emily Dillon, entering the room a few minutes after his departure.

"I didn't confess," said Kathleen, starting at the entrance of her enemy. "We only talked."

"And what did you talk about?"

"Oh, nothing." And Kathleen coloured.

"Rebellion! I can see it from your blush. But a Fenian ought to blush green."

"I'm not a Fenian."

"No; I hope not. I was only joking."



I had a letter from Tom by the evening post."

"Had you?" And a pang of jealousy came over Kathleen. "Was there one for me?"

"No: he sends you his love in mine, and hopes you are getting on with your riding."

"He might have written me a line," said Kathleen, turning away as her eyes filled with tears.

"Pooh, my dear, he hadn't time; he writes to me in a hurry, and men always hate letter-writing. They call it laziness, but some people might put it down to ignorance."

Kathleen turned to go to her room, her heart full of anger against the woman she deemed had supplanted her in her husband's love.

"We'd better take a ride, hadn't we? There are two more hours' daylight," said Emily.

"I shall not ride to-day," answered the other, curtly.

"I think you'd better, Kathleen. Tom expressly says he wants you to ride every day until your seat is improved."

"Then he had better write and tell me so himself," said Kathleen, furiously, and left the room.

Emily smiled, half-amused, half-pitying. "Poor child!" she thought, "so impulsive and warm-hearted, and *so* foolish," and she fell to thinking of other things, nor dreamed that her sister-in-law was registering, amid her tears, vows of vengeance against her upstairs.

Three weeks passed uneventfully away. The priest continued to urge Kathleen to rid the house of Emily. And still Kathleen could not make her mind up to do so, although her hatred of her sister-in-law increased with every letter she received from Tom; poor Kathleen never getting one.



This was all the more unaccountable, as in several of Tom's letters he mentioned being about to write to his wife. Kathleen wrote several times, and at last abandoned the attempt in despair. The priest chuckled, and bided his time. At last rumours, coming like the wind, no one knew whence, began to fly about the county as to Dillon's desperate doings in London; and as they oozed out from the servants' hall, both Emily and Kathleen heard them. His name was coupled with a married woman's in London, and it was said that their flight together was imminent. Emily said nothing to Kathleen of these reports, and hoped she would not hear them, and she wrote to her brother begging him to come home. Kathleen, by the direction of the priest, also said nothing of what she heard, but her heart grew heavy within her, and she almost prayed for death. "It cannot be true," she cried one day, in her agony. "I will never believe it."

“It is true,” whispered the priest, at her elbow, “and very soon you will have to believe it.”

At last, about six weeks after Dillon’s departure for London, she received a letter, unsigned, with the London post mark, the reading of which turned her ghastly white, and kept her seated motionless and almost lifeless through the whole of one long night. It ran—

“MADAM,—Out of pity for one so young and so unfortunate, I write you this letter. There is nothing but truth in it, as you must soon know to your cost. Your husband is untrue to you, false to his marriage vows, and his paramour is as guilty as himself. The whole plan has long been arranged between him and his sister. She is to keep you quietly at Ballytobin and prevent your interfering with his pleasure. When he is tired he may come back to you, but in the



meantime you are his sister's prisoner. No letter from you to him will reach you while she is in your house. Be warned in time. If he knew his plot was discovered, fear of the consequences might bring him back. Again, I say, be warned in time."

The grey morning was breaking in the east when Kathleen awoke from the strange stupor she had fallen in. She rose, a queer light in her eyes that her husband had never seen. "Unfaithful! Why should he keep faith with such as I? But she—I am her prisoner. Am I? We will see," and dressed as she had been at dinner the night before, she stood in Emily's bedroom.

"Good gracious, my dear!" cried Emily, waking and rubbing her eyes. "What on earth are you doing? Why, you have never been to bed!"

"No," replied Kathleen, standing at the foot of the bed, her lips white and quiver-

ing with suppressed passion. "No. I will not go to bed again while you are in my house!"

"Your house! Not go to bed! My dear Kathleen, are you mad!" and Emily sat up, wonderingly.

"No, I am not mad *now*. I have been. I am sane at last, and I know all. I know how you have schemed to lose me my husband's love—have prevented him from being to me what a husband should be—have tried to make my life miserable; and his, for I *could* make him happy if you were not by. Go! While he is away this is my house. It is for me to command. Go! We can live together no longer. My heart may be crushed, but, at any rate, you shall not stand by to watch its agony. Go! I will answer for what I do to my husband, and to him alone. I order you to go!"

"What is this, Kathleen? You are not



yourself; you do not know what you are saying!"

"Yes, I do," broke in Kathleen, furiously.

"I know well what I say, and it is but one word—*go!*"

Emily looked at her as she stood, beautiful in her passion, before her, and there was a pause. At length she spoke—

"You know that it was by his urgent request I consented to live here?"

"By his request!" exclaimed Kathleen, bitterly; "yes, I know that."

"And you order me from the house?"

"Yes."

"Then I will go to-day. The O'Tooles have asked me to come when I could. I will go there. But think, Kathleen, it is for your own sake I speak. Will Tom be pleased with what you are doing?"

"I thank you for your care for me, Miss Dillon, and I will be responsible to him—and to him alone."

"Remember, then, that it is by your orders I leave Ballytobin—for ever!"

"I will remember," replied Kathleen, "and do you remember, too, the misery you have brought on me."

"I cannot understand you," replied Emily. But the other had left her room. Confused and wondering, she arose, and having sent for a car to Ballytobin, too proud to ask her sister-in-law for a carriage, in a few hours she was on her way to the O'Tooles, who asked no questions, but received her with delight and some little surprise. Kathleen remained in her room till she departed.

"Well," said Kathleen to the priest, when he paid his daily visit, and had heard all that had occurred. "Have I done what you wished?"

"More, you have been too precipitate. She should have left of her own accord. What will your husband say?"

"Ah! what?" and Kathleen sighed wearily.

"You must write to him at once."

"But what can I say?"

"Say that you could not live together, and that she has gone. Leave explanations for another letter."

When Kathleen had written, she went down to the village to post her letter, and on her way she met the postman, who gave her an epistle from Tom. She recognised the handwriting with a start of joy, and was hurrying on to read it, when a sudden thought struck her, and she called back the postman.

"Have you had any letters for me, lately, Mick?" she asked.

"Sure an' I have, ma'am, siveral."

"You delivered them at the house?"

"I did, ma'am. I gave them with the others to Pat Doolan."

"Thank you, Mick. Good day to you."

"She did stop them then," said Kathleen

to herself with a gasp of anger. “She did steal Tom’s letters !”

If Kathleen could have been aware of certain interviews that Father Murphy had had with a new footman at Ballytobin, Emily would have been spared this suspicion.

Tom’s letter was kind, though short. He alluded to his former letters, and expressed surprise at Kathleen never having answered the questions in them ; hoped she was getting on with her riding, and was reading the books he had taken out of the library for her ; and said he should be obliged to stay in town, probably till the middle of spring. He ended by hoping that Emily and she were as good friends as ever.

“Oh, if he would only come home and live alone with me,” thought Kathleen, passionately pressing the letter to her lips, “I would make him love me !”



CHAPTER XIV.

OUT INTO THE WORLD.

THE passion which Lady Rafflewell's lazy beauty had inspired in Tom Dillon was as short-lived as it had been sudden. The very ease with which she fell disgusted him, and he soon began to weary, nay, to be ashamed of the *liaison* his friends envied him. He had made many friends in London already, and his success with the beautiful Greek had given him a sort of name among them. "She will soon throw him over as she does all of them," they thought, but they little suspected that the recipient of the favours himself was longing for this throwing over—weary of what so many men sighed for. And Lady Rafflewell herself

was far from the throwing over stage. She delighted in Tom's fresh, honest, unsophisticated mind, and was as near being in love as was possible for her. She was *exigante* to the last degree, and Tom groaned in spirit as he repaired reluctantly, like a schoolboy going to school, each day to Park Lane, to receive his orders for the day. He was dragged into all the gaiety possible in London out of the season—theatres, small dances, English opera, concerts, succeeded each other in quick succession, for Lady Rafflewell was proud of her young and handsome cavalier, and liked to show his allegiance. She also lost no opportunity of telling people that he was newly married, and had left his wife in the country. She had attempted once to talk to him about this neglected personage, but the very evident annoyance, if not anger, depicted on Tom's face when she broached the subject, warned her off such delicate ground. She



felt that her conquest was not yet complete, and her pride revolted against the idea of being beaten with her own weapons by this wild Irish boy, as she often called him, jestingly.

How true is the French proverb that tells us it is only the first step that matters! Once unfaithful to Kathleen, Tom had found many other things, that before he would have held in abhorrence, come easy to him, and his life, I am sorry to say, was not now a whit better than that of any of his bachelor friends. There were, of course, moments when he thought of his pretty wife, and a hatred of himself came over him; but he did not know, poor boy! how to break with Lady Rafflewell, and despite himself, was obliged to hug his chain and try to believe he did not feel its galling pressure.

Time passed on; the winter was fast retiring before the smiles of spring, and he was getting deeper into the mire. The

world had begun to say that Lord Rafflewell would some fine day find his hearth deserted, and Kathleen's image was growing fainter and fainter in her husband's breast. She appeared to him only as a dream of the past, when one morning the postman, that impartial messenger of Fate, brought him two letters which changed the current of his life. The first was from Emily, dated from the O'Tooles':—

“MY DEAR TOM,—You will be surprised to see where I am, and still more when I tell you why I am here. Kathleen came suddenly into my room a week ago, and ordered me from the house. She was too angry to be coherent, but I gathered from her that she suspected me of trying to prevent you loving her. Poor child! I cannot make her out; but I fear there is some bad influence over her at work. I have remained here a week without writing, as I hoped she

would have written ere this to ask me to return. As she has made no sign, however, I think it my duty to tell you of the occurrence. God knows I would not do anything that should spoil your married happiness, my dear Tom ; and I think it would be best for all that I should now make a home for myself. I told Kathleen that I would *never* return to Ballytobin, but that was in a momentary fit of anger ; and, of course, if you really wish it, I would go back and stay there till you came from London. It is not right that Kathleen should be left alone there, exposed, as from her antecedents she may be, to outward influences of a deleterious nature. The best thing, in my opinion, would be for you to return at once. It is so hard to arrange matters by letter. Hoping to see or hear from you very soon, Believe me, dear Tom,

“ Your affectionate sister,

“ EMILY DILLON.

“P.S.—No one in the county knows more than that I am paying a visit here. The O'Tooles themselves are totally without suspicion. Come home!”

The other letter was short, and in a cramped, laborious handwriting :—

“Oh, Tom, come home! I am so longing to see you, and you have been away so long. Come home! Emily has gone. We could not live together. Do not be angry; I will tell you all when you come. My heart is breaking, Tom. Why will you not come home? Oh, my love, I long for one more kiss, for one more smile. I cannot live without them.

“Your own,

“KATHLEEN.”

“Come! How can I come?” muttered Tom to himself. “But Emily must go back



to Ballytobin at once. I never heard of such nonsense."

He hurried off to Park Lane, and tried to persuade Lady Rafflewell that his presence in Ireland was necessary. A flood of tears was his answer.

"Ah! you love your wife better than me," cried she, sobbing.

"Why not?" was on the tip of his tongue, but the tears conquered in the end; and when he left the house, having promised to remain in town, the full lips curled into an exulting smile, and the sleepy eyes sparkled with the consciousness of a great victory. So, instead of going to Ireland, Tom sat down and wrote two letters; one to his sister, begging her at once to return to Ballytobin; and the following pleasant one to his wife:—

"MY DEAR KATHLEEN, — I am beyond measure astonished and annoyed at what

you have done. Your ingratitude is only equalled by your carelessness of my express wishes. I desire that immediately on receipt of this, you drive over to the O'Tooles, beg Emily's pardon for your inexcusable conduct, and entreat her to accompany you back to Ballytobin. This is my *command*, and I expect it obeyed without fail. As to my coming home, your conduct certainly is not such as to bring me. I shall, however, no doubt return before long, and shall expect to find that you have, by your behaviour to Emily, shown how repentant you are for this extraordinary conduct.

“Your affectionate husband,

“THOMAS DILLON.”

When Kathleen received this letter, in which no word of affection appeared, her heart seemed to stop beating. She could have humbled herself before Emily; she could have borne all and everything if

he had only said he loved her still. But the cold indifference of his words told her she was nothing to him. Poor child; it was a hard fate to crave so terribly for what could not be! Her eyes were tearless when the priest called, but there was an expression of despair in her face that startled him.

"You have heard from your husband?" he asked at once.

"Yes."

"And he says?"

"He says I am to go and bring Emily back."

"You will not!" exclaimed he, alarmed. "To do that would be to ruin your whole life. It is, as I said, a pitched battle between her and you. You will not give in now?"

"I would give in," said Kathleen, calmly, "if I thought Tom loved me. As it is, I have made up my mind. I will *not* go to her."

"You act rightly," said the priest. "It is



a thing he has no right to ask of you. Indeed, his whole behaviour——”

“Stop, Father Murphy!” said Kathleen, suddenly. “You need say nothing against him. I could not hear it!”

“Infatuated!” muttered he.

“Yes; infatuated, if you like,” cried she, her face softening as she spoke; “but it is an infatuation I love: it is one that shall last my life. Ah! I love him so that I would give—I will give my life for his happiness, and expect no return. I love him so——”

“Girl!” exclaimed the priest, harshly, seizing her arm, “you are a fool! Will you never know the nature of this clay you try to imagine gold? Will you never see——”

“No, I will never!” Her voice softened as her eyes rested on a picture of him that hung upon the wall. “To suffer for his happiness, that would be joy!”

The priest ground his teeth; but, after a



moment's pause, spoke in his usual calm manner—

“Well, you are a strange girl—would he were more worthy of you! When do you expect him home?”

“Home!” echoed Kathleen, dreamily, her eyes fixed upon the picture, “home! when—ah, when!”

“He did not tell you?” and Father Murphy spoke sharply and impatiently.

“No; but what matters it?”

“What matters it! I thought you were longing for his return?”

“Oh, yes, I was—I was—but now——”

“You fear his anger when he finds you have disobeyed him?”

“No. I fear nothing, if I can make him happy,” said Kathleen.

“He is happy enough in London,” said the other, with a sneer he could not repress.

Kathleen did not answer; she appeared to be in a dream, and the priest departed.

He was puzzled by her manner, and not half satisfied with the victory he had gained in the matter of Emily.

Next morning, Tim Doolan, proceeding, as was his wont, to unbar the several doors of the house, was shocked to find that the door opening upon the garden was unbolted, and only upon the latch. The footman was eager in his protestations of having carefully shut it, when a maid appeared, breathless and excited, and told them, gaspingly, that her mistress was not in her room, and had not been to bed ; that a small carpet-bag, filled with a few necessaries, had disappeared ; and that the note she carried she had found on the dressing-table. It was directed to Miss Dillon, at the O'Tooles', and, after a hurried search, Doolan decided to ride over with it at once. "Begorra ! I hope there's nothin' wrong to the mistress !" he ejaculated, with tears in his eyes ;

and all the household said the same ; for who could help loving the dark-eyed, gentle little creature ?

Emily had just received the letter from Tom, asking her to return to Ballytobin, when Doolan arrived, and the note was put into her hand. It was but short :—

“ You may return to Ballytobin. Please do ; Tom wants you. I see I cannot make him happy, and so I go. He will not miss me ; and I would rather make him happy by going, than stay to annoy him. He ought not to have married me, for he loves you best. Do not look for me. Search will be useless. May God forgive you, Miss Dillon !

“ KATHLEEN.”

In a few moments, Tim Doolan was galloping to Kilblazer with a telegram for his master in London.



BOOK III.

TAKEN HOME!

CHAPTER I.

MACDERMOT PASSES THE BOUNDARY.

IN a dark and dingy house, in one of the darkest and dingiest streets about Clerkenwell, sat two men. The only light in the room was that of a dark lantern, the rays of which fell sometimes on the face of one or other of them as they moved; but which only served to render the darkness more impenetrable around. One is speaking, and his voice is singularly melodious—

“I tell you you are wrong, Griffiths. This endless procrastination is maddening.

It must be to-night, or never. I tell you it must. It shall, if I do it single-handed!" He spoke fast and excitedly, and leaped to his feet at the conclusion of his sentence.

"Can you not listen to reason, James?" said the other. "I have been sent to tell you the time has not yet come. There are more preparations to be made, and the blow now would strike upon yourselves. There is no hope of success yet."

"Nonsense, Griffiths! It is only that they are half-hearted. They know not what it is to feel as I do. To-night, please God, a deed shall be done that shall echo from one end of England to the other; and even if I fall, I shall have achieved my object. S—— will be free; and what am I to the cause compared to him?"

"You have a good head and a bold heart, and should not thus sacrifice them."

“What use are they, unless for the cause? I tell you it is necessary that S—— should be freed, and at once. All preparations are made. It wants but a steady hand to complete the scheme; and now you tell me they draw back! No; I will go through with it at all risks. Oh, Ireland! and am I accounted worthy to die for thee? Welcome, death, in such a cause!”

The speaker moved, so that the rays of the lantern fell upon his face. There was a strange look on it, as of enthusiasm or madness. He turned to go. The other seized him by the arm—

“You shall not go, James! It were madness to do it to-night. You shall not go, I say!”

“Leave your hold!” shouted Macdermot, for it was he, “or, by Heaven, I shall do you an injury. Not go! By all the saints, it would take an army to stop me. Leave your hold, man! Let me go!”

“I will not,” exclaimed the other,

struggling with him. "You are mad to-night."

"Mad!" cried Macdermot with a wild laugh, as he paused for a moment, overcome by the strength of the man who held him. "Mad! Would not you be mad if you had waited as I have, day after day, week after week, month after month, watching the miserable subterfuges with which our leaders have put off the great day? Mad! Would not you be mad if you felt an illness creeping upon you that must soon end in death—death, before I have struck one blow? Mad! By G—d, I may be mad, but the deed shall be done to-night! To-night they shall know what vengeance and patriotism can do, though there is but one arm to show them. To-night they shall——"

His voice faltered. He stopped, gave a wild hurrah! and then burst into a fit of imbecile laughter. Something in his mind had given way. His illness,



want of food (for his money was all spent), and the delays that had chafed him so, had been too much for his excitable nature, and the handsome youth, so full of courage, patriotism, and ardour, was a mad-man. Laughing and crying alternately, he passed the night, tended by his friend with the care of an experienced nurse. As the morning broke, he fell into an unquiet sleep, and his friend, Griffiths, the Pennsylvanian stoic, bent over him with tears in his eyes.

“Poor James! What an end! But we are all mad.”

As he spoke the words there was a knock at the door, and in a few moments four policemen entered the room, accompanied by a villanous-looking being in rags.

“That is the man,” said the latter, pointing to the sleeping Macdermot.

Griffiths rose, angrily. “What do you want here?”



"Oh, nothin' much," answered the inspector. "Only to take care of this snoozy gentleman, Mr. Macdermot, *alias* O'Brien. We've had some trouble to find him, but expected to have met him last night, on his pleasant little errand of blowing us all up."

"You have a warrant, I suppose?" asked Griffiths.

"I fancy we have. Rather." And the policeman laughed.

"Then you must take him."

"I fancy we must. Rather." And again there was a laugh.

"But," went on Griffiths, "I would advise you to mind yourselves when you wake him. He is mad!"

"Ah," said the jocular inspector, winking; "it is singular he should go mad just at this moment, very. Isn't it? I suppose he hasn't known what he's been doing for the last four months, poor fellow!"

"Stand aside," said Griffiths, unheeding the ironical speech, "and let me wake him. He gently shook the sleeping man, who woke at once, and looked with expressionless eyes at the crowd around him. Then, with an unmeaning smile, he commenced to count his fingers.

"He don't do it bad," said the inspector, admiringly. "But, lor' bless yer, we know all about it. Get up, my man, and come along with us."

Macdermot turned to him, and sprang from his rude bed with a yell.

"For Ireland!" he cried, and dashed at the policeman nearest him, but they were too quick for him, and soon had him helpless among them, his hands and feet manacled.

"Use him gently," said the philosopher, as they thrust him down the narrow stairs.

"Use him gently."

"We'll use him as he uses us. Don't

you be afeard," replied one of the policemen, gruffly. "Get on, Bedlam!" and the curious procession left the house.

Griffiths, left to himself, coughed twice, rubbed his eyes as if ashamed of doing so, and affecting not to know there were tears in them, but only to think they required scratching, thought for a time, and then muttering, "Poor James! so young! I must see the last of him!" left the house, and followed in the same direction as the policemen.

Macdermot was so undoubtedly insane that it was not thought necessary to go through the form of bringing him before a jury. He was sent to a common asylum, and soon forgotten by those for whose sake he had lost his fortune and risked his life; but remembered sadly by his philosophic friend, and by one woman far away, whose heart turned to stone as she read the paragraph in the paper describing the arrest of a lunatic

Fenian, followed by the editor's joke about the state of mind of all other Fenians.

Thus ended the career of James Macdermot, whose only fault was that he loved his country too well for these prosaic days.





CHAPTER II.

THE PUNISHMENT BEGINS.

THE play to which Tom Dillon had accompanied Lady Rafflewell was a dull one, and the thoughts that filled his mind were equally so, for he was tired of his "splendid infidelity," and longed for the quiet of Ballytobin, and the trusting smiles of the wife he had neglected and dishonoured. "She will know nothing of all this, I shall forget it, and we will be happy together."

Ah, Tom, do you think that there can exist a crime that will not leave its sting? Do you imagine that punishment in this world does not follow hard upon the steps of vice; and all the more quickly does it

come, if the heart it approaches be not hardened and thoroughly vicious? Perhaps, who knows! its agony here may be the substitute for eternal torture. Be that as it may, it is certain that a sinner who is conscious of and repentant for his sin is far more severely punished than one who almost glories in his guilt. This seems unfair, but then how can we tell what may be beyond?

Tom was no world-worn cynic, whose conscience had long been silenced in despair. Even when his strong passion for the woman beside him had been at its height he had suffered acutely, and had felt inwardly the shame of self-contempt; and now that his feelings were gradually changing, and he began to see through the gorgeous cover into the coarse animal nature of that woman's heart, the revulsion was close at hand when all his so-called love would turn to loathing and hatred.

Curiously enough, among all his self-



reproaches, no thought of Rafflewell, the old friend he had betrayed, the man who had asked him into his house and trusted him to his own dishonour, ever intruded itself. I suppose there is some fundamental rule of human nature—duly appreciated, at Paris—that makes a husband the mark of contempt if he assert his rights, and the butt of ridicule if he do not. Certain it is that he gets no pity either way, and even his dearest friends join with their condolences a slight flavour of contempt.

But I digress. The play at which our quondam lovers were was, as I have said, dull, and their conversation languished terribly, so that it was a relief to both when the door opened, and admitted a third person. This third person was no less than the young Marquis of Bubbersleigh, a wealthy youth, who had ceased only two years ago to be an infant in the eye of the law, and who had not, for the

last six years, been an infant in his own eyes or those of people who knew him. His was a character worthy of a chapter to itself, had we room for it ; as it is, we must dismiss his Lordship in a few sentences.

In person he was short, and candour forces me to admit he was ugly. His white hair was brushed back with care from a low and receding forehead, spotted here and there with the fiery excrescences produced by over eating and intemperance ; untimely wrinkles creased his temples and drew down the corners of a large thick-lipped mouth. His half-indolent, half-insolent smile had no gaiety in it, and when he raised his eyes in anger or excitement, you were shocked at the brutal expression that flashed from those bloodshot orbs.

His hands, shaking as from palsy, but really only from his over night's debauch, were covered with immense and costly rings that served to draw attention to them as



they wavered like grass in a wind. Dressed always in the perfection of fashion, his trousers spreading out like a sailor's over his large but beautiful booted feet, and his hat curling, so that it seemed to say, in scorn, to other hats, "Look at me. I'm on the Marquis of Bubbersleigh's head;" his friends and toadies were loud in their praises of his appearance. "Always looks so gentlemanly," they said.

It will scarcely be believed that a being such as I have endeavoured to describe could meet with many smiles from the fair sex; but yes, he was rich, and, what is more important still, he was *the fashion*. Oh, Fashion! mysterious and inscrutable goddess, whose commandments are as Holy Writ, and whose displeasure is utter annihilation, come down for a moment from thy pedestal of crime and folly, and whisper to us thy secrets. Tell us, we pray thee, what it is that thou canst see and approve in those that thou



choosest for thy priests, or in the high-bred idiots who minister at thy altars? Thy dogma of infallibility has been pronounced, we know, by thousands of worshiping devotees; but beware! we live in a practical age. Let thy wisdom,—for thou lackest not that quality,—teach thee the signs of the times, lest a stronger one than thyself confront thee, and thou liest prone beneath the contemptuous feet of Truth and Reason!

Bubbersleigh was on the turf, and even his ample fortune did not prevent his being a swindler. He would give his best friend false information with an easy smile, and lie away a woman's character with an insolent shrug. He was courted, fêted, petted, by all the greatest and loveliest women in London, and he repaid them with scorn and insult; but from him scorn and insult were expected. Even they became fashionable emanating from such a source. The most



right-minded and religious mothers were ready to trust any of their tender daughters to his care, though he openly scoffed at the idea of religion, and they knew that he was a drunkard and a debauchee of the most horrible kind. The stews of the Haymarket, the pestilential slums of Windmill Street, every night-house where vice held revelry, could have testified to the nature and generosity of the noble young Marquis. Not that he knew of them, or ever troubled himself to go to such places; but the little pleasures his gold made it so easy for him to gratify filled them with their degraded frequenters, and many a girl traced the origin of a career she could scarcely look back upon and live, to the beautifully dressed young gentleman whom Duchesses destined for the lovely Ladies This and That, just emerging from the innocence of the rural school-room. Utterly ignorant of all that an educated man should know, he was shrewd

and quick-witted enough where the amount of a robbery or the character of a woman was at stake, and it would have taken a rogue of very high pretensions to have over-reached him where swindling was in question.

Such was the young gentleman who entered the box where Lady Rafflewell and our hero were seated ; and, his face crimson from the effects of his dinner, commenced a running fire of *double entendres* into her Ladyship's willing ear. His voice was thick and indistinct however, and she had to laugh heartily several times without being fully aware of all the prurient jocularities of the story he was telling.

With a shudder of loathing he could not restrain, Tom turned away, and tried to fix his thoughts upon the stage and to keep them from flying away to his home that had been—nay, might again be—so happy, and the young wife who loved him so purely and devotedly. What

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was she doing now, he thought? Dreaming of his return, poor girl; longing for his kiss. Yes; he would break from the trammels of this shameful life that he had been leading for the last two months, and would return to her at once. He was not fitted for a London life; its whirl, even in the dead season, carried him away, and hurried him into actions he was ashamed of while he did them. As, with hazy and unseeing eyes, he gazed at the brilliantly-lit stage, where Her Majesty's servants were strutting their little hour, Kathleen's slight, graceful form arose between them and him, and the voice, whose sweetness was intensified by the pretty brogue, seemed to whisper in his ear—"Oh, Tom! why won't you love me?" The bitterness of remorse fell upon his heart, and tears, of which he need not have been ashamed, filled his eyes.

He turned and looked at his companions, and smiled as he saw Lady Rafflewell's over-

acted interest in the Marquis's conversation. "I am afraid I can't be jealous," he thought, "but, at any rate, I can make it an excuse to end this folly." The play was drawing to a close, when he rose, and took his leave, Lady Rafflewell scarcely appearing to notice his departure, so absorbed was she in her cavalier. The said cavalier was much astonished, and slightly mortified afterwards, at the sudden want of interest she showed in him or his conversation; but the idea that he was only being made use of could not enter into his lordly head. Tom determined, as he drove to his club, that he would pack up his things that night, and be off by the morning train to Ireland, and he felt happier, as he leaped out of his cab and found several of his new friends on the club steps, than he had felt for years.

"By-the-bye!" said one of them, after some conversation, "the porter has a telegram for you, Dillon, brought over from

your lodgings. He wanted to know where to send it to, and I was inclined to say 'Park Lane.'"

Tom omitted to reply to the insinuation contained in the last remark, for a vague fear had seized on him. What could there be to telegraph about? He sprang upstairs, and in a moment was standing white and breathless in the club hall. The words of the message were but few—

"Come home at once. Kathleen has gone, and we know not where. I am doing all I can."

Stunned, scarcely knowing what he did, Tom replied, in vague negatives, to several invitations from men standing round to night amusements, and left the club, while a general murmur went round the hall—"The Rafflewell business is blown. Well, it must have been soon"—for of course all London knew what those most interested thought to be a profound secret.

On arriving at his lodgings, to his surprise and annoyance, Tom found there the man of all others, that he least wished to meet now, Lord Rafflewell, who was seated in an arm-chair, smoking.

"In at last!" he exclaimed, as Tom entered. "You must excuse the liberty I have taken, old fellow, but I wanted particularly to see you. Good God! how pale you are! what has happened? Are you seedy?"

"No," said Tom, seizing a brandy-bottle that stood with its attendants of soda-water on the table, and pouring himself a glass with a shaking hand. "No, I'm all right. What's your important business, eh?" and he tried, somewhat unsuccessfully, to put a sprightly and unconcerned tone into his question.

"Dillon," said Rafflewell, gravely, "you're an old friend of mine. I have not many friends, and I believe you to be the truest of

them all, although we have met so little of late years."

"Yes, old fellow, I hope I am true," said Tom, thinking of her Ladyship and shuddering.

"You would give me your advice—nay, your assistance, if I was in trouble?"

"Of course I would."

"I knew you would, Tom! I was right to rely on your friendship." He rose, and crossed the room, to shake Tom by the hand—a shake that made Tom's fingers tingle with shame. For a moment there was a pause, only broken by the lodging clock mournfully ticking the irrevocable hours. Then Rafflewell went on—

"I have never been a very happy man, Tom; though no doubt you have thought me so. When I was a poor ensign in a marching regiment, with my horizon bounded by the dazzling prospect of retiring some day as a half-pay major, I always longed

for power, wealth, and, in short, everything that was, or seemed, unattainable. When the turn came and I had them, I found they did not bring happiness, although they might be made to bring pleasure—a very different thing. A year in London told me to seek elsewhere a wife, and travelling abroad I met Zoe. You will believe how beautiful she was. Ah! I can scarcely bear to think of that happy time—the only real bit of happiness my life has ever known! I pass over our first few months, which I passed in a dream, the awakening was soon to come. I began to suspect that my wife was not all to me that a wife should be. I began to see that at times my presence, my caresses, were disagreeable to her. No suspicion of anything worse entered my mind—but that she *had* tired of me—that I was not worthy of her. I was miserable, and thought I could not be more so; but I was wrong—the cup

was not full. The little house I had at Athens was the resort of many of the best-born Greeks, who had been friends of my wife's. A young cousin of hers, handsome as Apollo, deceitful as Lucifer, was one of our most frequent visitors. She said they had been playmates in childhood. How could I suspect anything in their constant companionship. I told myself a thousand times a day that I did *not* suspect, but I did—and with reason? Yes, Tom; at last I held the proofs of their guilt, and I did not go mad. I did not kill him—or her! I am not an impulsive fellow, as you know (perhaps that is why I am so unpopular). I am accustomed to think before I act. So I sat down, almost stupified with grief and thought. If I acted as I had a right to act, and repudiated the wife who had dishonoured me, I saw clearly that the rest of my life would be but one long misery. I loved her still—call me infatuated if you



will, but I loved her still ! I thought that perhaps her heart might be touched by generosity, though I knew it could not be frightened by severity. I found them together one afternoon, when they thought I was out for my daily ride, and I told them I knew all. Protestation and denials were vain, for I held his letters in my hand. They stood awaiting my next movement : he half defiant, half cowed by my calm manner : she self-possessed and seemingly prepared for the sentence of disgrace I should pronounce. What was their surprise when I turned to him, and asked him if he loved her enough to help me to save her reputation. I made him promise to see her no more, and I left Greece that week and came to England. Zoe was touched, as I had hoped, by my behaviour, and swore that it was but the infatuation of a moment that had taken her from my love—that now, and for ever, she was all mine, body and soul !



Poor fool that I was ! I believed her, and yet I do not regret it, for I was happy in my belief, as I shall never be again." He paused for a moment as his voice faltered. Tom sat with his eyes on the ground and did not speak.

"And now comes what I want you to help me in. I have again discovered her infidelity. Again she has betrayed, dishonoured me !" Tom started, and moved uneasily, never raising his eyes.

"Her maid—oh ! Heaven, that I should have recourse to such means !—has betrayed her to me, for revenge of some little fancied wrong, I suppose ; and though I have tried to doubt, I can do so no longer. Oh, Tom, it is too horrible to have all the life squeezed out of one, as it were, like this !"

"But his name ?" asked Tom, in a hoarse voice, looking up for the first time.

"That I do not know, as yet ; the proofs I tell you are clear and undoubted ; but

they have been given me in such a way that as yet I know not his name. The maid was afraid of violence, or something, I suppose; but of course I must soon know, or even if I do not it matters but little. I have resolved on my course, and revenge has not entered my head. Tom, I love her still!"

Dillon looked at him and saw that his eyes were filled with tears. "You love her still?"

"Yes—one cannot account for love—one cannot regulate it," said Rafflewell, almost fiercely. "I know that in the eyes of the world I am a fool, or worse. But I have never much cared for the world's opinion, and it certainly shall not interfere *here*. I have determined—and I have thought deeply over it—that my wife's name shall never be dragged in the mire—shall never be made the target for vulgar ridicule, and the scorn of many worse than her. To the end, if I



can effect it, she shall seem as pure as she did to me when I married her. I may not love her, but I will love the ideal I once formed of her—the memory of what she was, or seemed to be. But I can never see her again. It would break my heart to look upon that which is, and yet is so far from being, mine. It would kill me to live with her as a hated tyrant or policeman. No. I am going away far—as far as I can get from my misery ; though, indeed,

‘ What exile from himself can flee ? ’

I have fortune enough for both of us. I wish the world to think we have separated from some fault of mine—through incompatibility of temper—at any rate, no whisper of the truth must be known. You understand what I want of you, Tom ? ”

“ Not exactly.”

“ I want you, as my intimate friend, and as one acquainted with the whole affair, to

put it in the light I wish it. I want you to give the lie to any one who shall attempt to cast a slur upon her ; and I want you to go to her, and to tell her—for I cannot write—what I have decided. To implore her, for the sake of her children, whom I shall never see again—for the sake of any love she once bore me—for the love of Heaven and her hope of salvation—to live so that her name may never be mentioned with slighting or shame before those children when they grow up. Tell her all her wants will be amply provided for. I have settled the house in Park Lane upon her. Tell her I—— No, do not tell her I love her ; but tell her I forgive her, and pray God may do so too. I will never willingly see her again, but she will always be my wife, and the mother of my children. Kiss them for me, Tom ; and tell little Harry never to think ill of his father—only to think he has been foolish and is—unhappy.” Rafflewell’s

voice failed him, and he covered his face with his hands, and bent down from his chair towards the ground.

Tom Dillon was choking, but what to say he knew not. He sat silent, and the ticking of the clock seemed to be beating at his heart, and thundering, "traitor!" in every stroke.

At last Rafflewell looked up. "You will do this for me, Tom?"

"Are you sure——"

"Yes, I am sure it is what I will do. I have made up my mind. *Nothing* can shake my determination. I may count on you?"

"Oh, Rafflewell," cried Tom, springing out of his chair and standing before him, "I cannot! I cannot!"

"You cannot!" repeated the other, slowly, and as if only half comprehending him. "You cannot?"

"No. I would do, God knows! all I

could for you. I would almost give my life to help you, but in this I cannot !”

“Friendship !” exclaimed Rafflewell, bitterly, standing up, as if about to go. “I might have known what it is worth ; but I did think——”

“Oh, think so still,” interrupted Dillon, distractedly. “My friendship for you is——” he hesitated, and left the sentence unfinished. How could he pretend to friendship for this man, whose life he had wrecked ?

“Your friendship for me is worth what that of others is,” and he turned to leave the room.

“Stop,” cried Dillon, with such grief in his tone that Rafflewell halted and looked back.

“You will do it ?” he said.

“Anything else in the world,” began Tom, but with an impatient gesture the other left the room, and in another moment the

noise of the street-door shutting resounded through the house. Dillon threw himself into a chair and groaned. May it never be your fate, reader, to have such a hell in your heart as seethed in his! Verily, punishment on earth is sometimes severe enough!

* * * *

The world—that is, the fashionable London world—were not much astonished at Rafflewell's sudden departure from England. He was such an odd fellow, they said; but it was terribly aghast when his wife suddenly withdrew from society, and it was debarred from the pleasure of enjoying the hospitality of that beautifully-mounted house in Park Lane. However, even this blow was soon forgotten—three days, and not nine, is the time of a wonder in London—and everything went on exactly as if Lord and Lady Rafflewell had never existed and given feasts and dances. Her Ladyship, it

is true, was sometimes seen driving in unfashionable localities, and it was reported that she was thinner, and had fallen off in looks. Be that important fact as it may, we must leave the metropolis, and accompany Dillon to Ballytobin.





CHAPTER III.

A MARRIAGE AND A DEATH ANNOUNCED.

WHEN Dillon arrived at his home it may well be imagined that the search he made for his wife was thorough, but it was ineffectual. He employed detectives, he advertised, mysteriously, in all the newspapers he thought there was a chance of her seeing, but all to no purpose. It was scarcely in the man to despair, so buoyant and sanguine was his nature; but when eight months had rolled by, and no sign of Kathleen had been discovered, he began to own to himself that it was hopeless, and that he was, in fact, a widower. His was a nature to value things to a great extent by their impossibility, and

assuredly he loved her more now that she had left him, as it seemed for ever, than he had done before. Every charm she had, and they were many, came before him now with redoubled seductiveness: every smile she had given him, and she had given him many, rose before his eyes, while the thought that he had lost them for ever nearly drove him mad. He blamed himself most bitterly for his conduct to her. But he did not forget to blame others too; and his sister had need of all her patience and love for him to bear the unjust reproaches he at times heaped upon her. To a certain extent she knew it had been her fault, but her sense of justice revolted sometimes against his accusations; and their life together at Ballytobin was not always a happy one. The neighbours, with that good taste that nearly always characterizes county folk, had abstained from intruding upon his sorrow, which they one and all were truly sorry for; for, as I have

said before, Tom Dillon was a most popular man in his county. The priest he had seen two days after his arrival, and had begun—for he was almost mad with grief and remorse—by accusing him of having a hand in Kathleen's flight. Father Murphy's anxiety and sorrow, however, were too genuine not to impress him with their truth, and at the end he and Tom became great friends, and the former made himself very useful in making inquiries, going up to Dublin on visits to the police, &c. Tom gradually subsided into a lethargic melancholy, from which no effort of Emily's could rouse him, though he showed a kind and considerate feeling for *her* troubles when she talked of Macdermot and the terrible end of all his young hopes and ambitions.

"He might have been a great man," said Tom, musingly; "but he passed the boundary that divides enthusiasm and madness. He was a dreamer, and his energy could only

be misdirected. Perhaps it is better so, Emily ; perhaps he is happy now, as he could never have been while his active mind lived and prompted him to attempt the impossible."

Emily did not speak, but the pressure she gave her brother's hand showed that she joined in his hope, and owned the truth of his remark.

The winter came again, with its fox-hunting pleasures, but Tom remained resolutely at home, while his red coat lay useless in the drawer. He never went outside his park gates, and his steward and others who had to do with him complained that his temper was getting very uncertain.

Again spring came, laughingly driving the shivering old grey beard of winter before her, and still the quiet and intense melancholy of Ballytobin had not been disturbed, either by good news or bad. Still the agony of suspense was upon the master of the place.



A few visitors had begun from time to time to call, but most of them, frightened at their gloomy reception, had determined not to come again. Father Murphy had become a constant inmate, and Tom had begun unconsciously to lay great store by his opinion, and to act a great deal by his advice. The priest chuckled as he saw the game becoming his own, even while his strongest card was gone, and worked quietly and surely in the direction of his ambition, and, perhaps, his self-called duty. Of late, however, he had been a good deal up to Dublin, and Tom had been surprised to find how much he missed him, and how annoyed he was when the priest could not make a third at the dinner-table. There was a tacit animosity between his Reverence and Emily, that however never came to open war. She saw that the priest was useful to her brother, and did not dream of interfering with him.

One day—a hot summer's day—more than



a year after Kathleen's departure, Emily and Tom were sitting out on the terrace at the back of the house, Tom's eyes fixed upon the distant hills, as if searching for the exact spot where he was so wildly married, when Pat Doolan approached them in that half-independent, half-respectful way that marks the native servant, and confidentially announced Miss Grubbe of Grubbestown, and Mr. Fenelly. Their coming together excited no surprise, as Miss Grubbe, by virtue of her literary reputation, was scarcely looked upon by the county as a young lady.

"Well?" said Miss Grubbe, as soon as she had been provided with a garden chair, and Doolan had been instructed to bring some of the beverage that women love. "Well?"

This was said in such a sharp and almost injured tone, that Tom and his sister started and looked alarmedly at the great authoress. They were relieved, however, by seeing that



the interrogative was addressed to Mr. Fenelly, who stood before them, blushing very red, and evidently much perplexed.

"Well?" again said Miss Grubbe, and this time the note was even sharper and more startling than before.

Mr. Fenelly jumped, and in despair, gasped out, "*What*, my dear?"

Miss Grubbe's thin lips curled into a withering smile, under which Mr. Fenelly quailed, as they briefly answered, "Footstool."

A beam of delight wrinkled all the resident magistrate's face as he leaped forward to do her bidding. Somehow his feet became entangled in one another, and he fell prone before her, placing as he fell, however, with much adroitness, the footstool in its proper position. Tom and Emily had to do all they could to look grave under Miss Grubbe's piercing look, and eventually Mr. Fenelly got himself picked up, and sat down on the

edge of a chair, as if he expected company behind him.

The conversation was somewhat difficult, for Mr. Fenelly was so taken up watching lest Miss Grubbe wanted anything, that he did not dare trust himself to speak, while her monosyllabic and oracular remarks did not help it on. At last, as Tom was meditating pleading important business, and leaving Emily to get rid of her visitors—just like a man, fair reader, was it not?—Miss Grubbe cleared her throat, and with Mr. Fenelly's eyes fixed admiringly on her face, began—

“Marriage is a ceremony of very ancient origin.”

“It began in Eden, I believe,” said Tom, vaguely.

“Perhaps, Mr. Dillon ; but there have been many alterations in its form since.”

“Yes ; that there have.” And Tom



thought of the ceremony that joined him to her he had lost.

“It is a ceremony I, in common with most right-thinking people, hold in great reverence.”

“Indeed,” said Emily, with just a little touch of sarcasm in her tone.

“Yes,” and Miss Grubbe’s manner became slightly defiant; “but to a certain extent I have considered myself, up to this, wedded to literature—to art in its highest form. Now, however, I feel that the time has come when I may loosen the iron rule I had formed for my guidance; and conforming to the usages of most, I may say, personable women, may allow another to share my pleasures and sorrows—and sorrows—”

As she repeated these ominous last words she looked sharply at Mr. Fenelly, who heaved his body forward as if to express his desire to take the sorrow all to himself.

“The visit we—” (Great emphasis on the

we, and another look at Mr. Fenelly, who again heaved, but this time with pleasure) “we have to-day paid to all our neighbours—Ballytobin coming last, as it is nearest my home—has been for the purpose of making known to them our intent. Mr. Fenelly and I are about to be married.”

Mr. Fenelly heaved with a great convulsion as his *fiancée* looked at him for the third time, and smiled timidly. Miss Grubbe gave a melancholy frown, which increased at his smile, so that he quickly assumed his former anxious, half-frightened look.

“I congratulate you most heartily, my dear Fenelly,” said Tom; “and you too, Miss Grubbe, if I may be allowed——”

“Thank you, Mr. Dillon,” interrupted Miss Grubbe, as Mr. Fenelly began a heave, and then recollecting himself, sat bolt upright again, “thank you; but I—that is, *we*—look upon congratulations as so much airy humbug. When people come to the

age which I—I may say *we*—have reached, we are not supposed to fall in love or any ridiculous trash of that sort. Our union is one of intellect and of convenience. We think we shall suit each other. My literary labour will cast no obstacle in the way of Mr.—I mean of Reginald's—magisterial duties; and of course" (and a half-sneer came over her face) "his duties will not interfere with me. We shall live at Grubbestown, and we hope you will pay us a visit before long, as we dispense with the folly of a honeymoon?"

Mr. Fenelly had given a tremendous heave at the invitation; but looked grave and somewhat melancholy at the final resolve.

"And when is the happy event to come off?" asked Tom, smiling in despite of himself.

"Oh, at—" began Mr. Fenelly, opening his lips for the first time, and blushing; but Miss Grubbe interrupted him.

“Reginald! I think it is for *me* to answer. Next week the ceremony is to be performed privately in my own church. The clerk will give me away—a needless and antiquated ceremony; and I have requested Reginald to bring with him his clerk to act as best man—another absurdity.”

“I’m sure I wish you joy, most heartily,” said Emily.

“Thank you,” said Miss Grubbe. “Well?”

Mr. Fenelly, who had given his eyes leave, and looked for an instant at Emily as she spoke, jumped a foot in the air, and looked horrified at being unable to guess the purpose of Miss Grubbe’s “well?”

“Well?” she said again, and shrilly, and again the poor magistrate leaped into the air. On coming down he obtained courage enough to stammer out—

“What, dear?”

“Don’t you see I want to go? Ask for the carriage.”



Away sped he blindly across the croquet-ground, and again did he measure his length upon the sward, as his feet came in contact with a hoop.

"Awkward," muttered Miss Grubbe, under her breath, which was an unjust remark, as he was only blind because of her.

Tom accompanied them to the hall-door, when it struck Miss Grubbe that she wished to think, and could only do so alone; so poor Mr. Fenelly got cheerfully into the box, and taking the reins, must have had a stiff neck by the time he reached home, as he contrived all the way to keep one eye upon the horses and one upon his lady love.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Tom, as he rejoined his sister on the terrace. "Well, that's the queerest couple I have seen for many a day. Poor Fenelly's changed already; what will she turn him into?" and again he laughed.

"I wish they'd come here every day,"

said Emily, looking fondly at him, "for that's the first good honest laugh I've heard from your lips since——"

She stopped suddenly, as she saw the look of pain her words had called up. At this moment the priest emerged from the house.

"Here's the Father," said Tom, "just come from Dublin. He might have some news."

Poor fellow, he had said the same on each occasion of Father Murphy's visit to Dublin, and his hopes had always been disappointed. He slowly approached them.

"What a time he takes to come!" said Tom, impatiently. "One would think he was walking in his sleep. Well, Father, what is it?" he shouted, as the priest came within fifty yards of them.

There was no answer till he had approached close, and then something in his face kept Tom and his sister silent.



"My poor friend," said he, kindly, attempting to take Tom's hand. He waved him back.

"You have news! What is it? Quick!—I shall choke! Quick! Have you found her?"

"Yes."

"Yes!" echoed Tom, with a wild shout. "Yes! God be thanked—God be thanked!" and he fell upon his knees.

"My poor friend!—my poor friend!" said the priest, slowly and distinctly, but with emotion. I *have* found her; but it is too late. She is dead."

Tom, still upon his knees, gazed at the priest for a moment as if he did not comprehend his words; then suddenly a horrible distortion came upon his features, and he fell forward upon his face.



CHAPTER IV.

THE PHILOSOPHER FINDS A TREASURE.

As an Irishman, of course I consider Dublin "the finest city upon the sea," but in truth I am bound to own that on a bleak cold night in March its dreary quays and dirty streets do not present a very agreeable *coup d'œil*. It was on such a night that a slightly clad shrinking girl crouched on one of the many bridges that span the sewer-like Liffey, and shivered with cold; but notwithstanding her shivering, and the appearance she had of being half-frozen and ill, there seemed to be a deeper grief within her that recked little of the outward influences, and tortured her far more than

did each cutting blast that howled blusteringly round the corner of the neighbouring houses. A tall and peculiar looking man wrapped in a large loose cloak, came striding across the bridge, now and again swinging his long and somewhat uncouth arms across his chest to warm them. As he passed the dark figure of the girl, he stopped for a moment, and seemed to hesitate; then growling out, "What nonsense: probably drunk," he walked on in a determined manner. He had not reached the other side of the bridge, however, before he again turned, hesitated for a moment, and slowly, and as it were reluctantly, retraced his steps, and came back to where he had left the crouching, shivering figure.

"You will die of cold," he said, in a harsh voice. "Have you no home?"

He could catch no glimpse of the girl's face, for, at the sound of his voice she had hidden it in her scanty cloak.

"Have you no home—no shelter?" he asked again, adding, under his breath, "a pretty fool I am!"

"Go away!" answered a trembling, muffled voice. "I can't take anything, I am no beggar!"

"My poor girl," said the man, bending over her, "I did not say you were a beggar, but you must not stay here; you will die!"

"Die! why not?" was the answer, so faint that he with difficulty heard it.

"Why not? because I will not let you. It is madness to stay here. You must go home."

"Home!" and she looked up in his face. He started back.

"Mrs. Dillon!" he cried, aghast.

"You know me!" and she shrank down for a moment against the stone parapet, then, starting up, she essayed to run away but her feeble limbs refused to bear her,

and she would have fallen to the ground had not he followed, and caught her in his arms.

“Let me go!” she cried, unable to struggle, so weak was she. “Let me go! You will betray me!” and she looked affrightedly at the kind face bending over her.

“Betray you, my poor girl! No, why should I? but I will save. You shall tell me as much, or as little, of your story, my poor child, as you will; but you must not stay here!”

He dashed his hand across his eyes as he spoke, and seemed afraid to meet her gaze. The burden in his arms was very light, as he fairly carried her along the gas-lit bridge, and plunged into the darkness of a back street.

“Where are you taking me?” said she, feebly, after they had traversed several of these, and he was slackening his pace while he endeavoured to free one arm to get out his latch-key.

"Taking you?" and the tall, grizzled man blushed as he spoke. "My lodgings are but poor, but they are warmer than the street. At least, you will stay till morning." His tone was that of a preux chevalier inviting a duchess to his house.

"Why are you so kind?" said Kathleen, in a low voice, and in another moment she had fainted.

It was a sight to see that tall Don Quixote of a man laying the poor, fragile, half-dead girl upon his rude bed, stirring up the embers of the expiring fire, and blowing savagely at them till they consented to give forth a feeble glimmer. Undoing, with large trembling hands, the strings that held the little bonnet upon the dark dishevelled hair; sprinkling, with an amusing fear of overdoing it, water over the pale brow; and most ridiculous was it of all to see the leap of delight with which he heralded the opening of her eyes, and the look of comic



gravity with which he said to himself, as he went to his cupboard to search for provisions—"Well, you are a fool! Philosopher, indeed!"

"Where—where—who is that?" asked Kathleen, as she slowly recovered from her fainting fit, in that strange, uncomfortable state that follows such things.

"You mustn't ask any questions now," said the man (whom, perhaps the reader has already recognised as Griffiths the Pennsylvanian Stoic); "you are faint, and in want of food. It's so late, I'm afraid I can't get anything good enough for you; but there's the remains of a beefsteak-pie here; and a glass of brandy and water will do you all the good in the world."

"Oh, no! I can't eat!" cried Kathleen, trying to get off the bed; but finding herself too exhausted to move, she sank back, and allowed him to place the tumbler of brandy and water he had prepared to her lips.

"There ! you feel better now, don't you?" and the Stoic looked at her with an air of tender pride.

She gave a sickly smile. "Thank you—thank you! But I feel so weak, I can't——"

"Oh, you mustn't think of getting up—not till you're quite strong!" said he, eagerly, as she made another attempt to rise.

"But this is your room!" she said, with a blush, "and your bed!"

"Oh, no!" said the Stoic, blushing too, as he told the lie. "This is a friend's room; he's gone away for six weeks, and lent it me. I live in another part of the house."

"I've seen you before, somewhere," said Kathleen, vaguely, after a pause, during which the Stoic had been preparing his beefsteak pie for consumption.

"Yes. Once you saw me on your journey from England. You must try some pie—please do!"

His anxiety that she should eat was so great and evident, that she consented at last to be propped up, by means of all her host's wardrobe stuffed under the pillow, and to take some of the pie. Her first mouthful pleased him so that she was obliged to have another; another followed, and as the colour came back to her cheek, and her blood commenced again to circulate in her veins, she began to remember that she had not eaten for two days. The Stoic's joy at her meal, and her returning strength, was unbounded.

"I knew beefsteak-pie was the thing," he cried. "There! don't you feel better now?"

"Oh, yes," she said, smiling, as he rubbed his hands with joy, and stood gazing at her. "And now I must go."

The sigh that accompanied these words said, as plainly as words could say, "Where?"

"Where?" echoed the Stoic.

"I cannot stay here," said Kathleen, and her colour fled at the idea of again braving the cold, cruel streets alone.

"No, no; you *must* not go," said he, firmly, but tenderly. "I will not let you. You are my prisoner."

She made an effort to rise, and he leant over her and said again—

"Mrs. Dillon, you must accept my poor hospitality—at least for this night. I know not what misfortunes have overtaken you, though I do know—I read in your face—that they can be by no fault of yours. But I claim the right to save your life, for you would die if you went back into the cold. And as to the thoughts that are in your mind, dismiss them. Good Heaven! I am nearly sixty years old"—I am afraid he added ten years to his age—"and such ideas are ridiculous. I will be your old nurse to-night, whether you will or no."

Kathleen tried to speak, but burst into

tears instead; and soon her sobs had changed into the heavy breathing of sound sleep.

Griffiths gazed at her long and thoughtfully, and as he gazed, the hard look that was usual to his haggard features changed and softened; a tear fell upon the little arm that hung so gracefully down by the side of the bed, and seemed to startle him.

“Fool!” he muttered, “that I, the Stoic, the man who has killed feeling, should whimper over the first girl I find in trouble! But yet—how lovely she is!”

And, indeed, Kathleen was beautiful enough as she lay—with her long dark hair half covering her slight form; her lips slightly parted, and half smiling at some pleasant dream; her long lashes curling downwards over her pale cheeks—to have drawn tears from many a tougher subject than this self-styled, soft-hearted philosopher.



CHAPTER V.

A CURIOUS MÉNAGE.

WHEN Kathleen woke next morning, she found herself alone ; and it was some time before she could collect herself sufficiently to remember where she was, or how she came to be lying in that truckle bed, in that mean-looking attic-chamber. What was her surprise, too, to find that all the necessary articles of toilette were laid out, and a bath—evidently bran new, for it smelt decidedly of paint—was placed ostentatiously in the middle of the floor. But the agony of her situation soon overcame all her wondering, and she flung herself on the bed with a burst of wild, bitter grief. When she had

somewhat recovered and had risen, she found, with a sensation of joy, that she was almost too weak to walk across the room, and that her chest gave her still the pain it had done for the last three days.

"Thank God!" she murmured, as she held a chair for support, "it cannot last long."

Soon a gentle tap was heard at the door, and a gruff voice, struggling to be tender, was heard outside.

"How do you feel this morning, Mrs. Dillon? and how soon shall you be ready for breakfast?"

Kathleen tried to answer cheerily. "Thank you, I am much better; and I shall be ready directly," and she hurried herself painfully to make her words good.

It was a curious sight that breakfast. The tearful, pale, fragile-looking girl, and the tall, somewhat shabby, but scrupulously gentlemanlike man. He would not touch

the sausages he had provided until she ate one, which she did with difficulty, trying hard to smile all the time; and every cup of tea, which he proudly watched her drink, seemed as if it would have choked her. At last, when he permitted her to say she had had enough, and had cleared away the things and placed them carefully in a cupboard, Kathleen turned to him, the big tears standing in her eyes, and said—

“How shall I ever thank you, Mr.——”

“Griffiths,” said he; “sometimes called the Stoic, or the Philosopher.”

“Mr. Griffiths, for all this kindness, which I do not deserve; which I cannot understand.”

“Oh, we wont talk about that,” said he, hurriedly; “it’s nothing. I met your husband once, and took an interest in him; and besides,” he added, with a touch of gallantry, “who could have helped doing all he could for *you*? But what is the matter,



Mrs. Dillon? Don't cry; don't," and he awkwardly tried to pat her on the back, by way of consolation.

The mention of her husband's name had been too much for her, and a burst of tears had followed it.

"Oh, Mr. Griffiths," she cried, "I am so miserable!"

"Yes, yes; I see you are," said Griffiths, nervously walking up and down the room. "But it will all come right; you must never despair."

"It will never come right," said Kathleen, as her sobs ceased. "And I am a fool to cry; but forgive me, for I am weak and ill."

Griffiths turned away to the window, for it would never have done that she should see a tear on the cheek of a Stoic.

"My dear Mrs. Dillon," he said, when he had blown his nose, "I do not mean to ask you for your confidence. It is not likely

that you would give it to a rough brute like me; but if I can do anything for you, please, please do not hesitate to ask it of me."

"I will ask it." And Kathleen held out her little hand, which he shook reverently, and as if afraid of breaking it—indeed, it did seem fragile. "I will ask it, because you seem to be a noble and a kind man. I cannot tell you much, and it would not interest you; only you must know that I have left what was my home for ever!"

"Poor child!" murmured Griffiths, under his breath.

"What I will ask of you is to find me some place where I can hide myself, and die!"

"Die!" exclaimed he, starting up. "Pshaw! you mustn't talk of such things. Die?"

"Yes, Mr. Griffiths, I feel I shall die soon; and why should I hide from myself

the only thing that consoles me? Do you think I want to live?"

Griffiths looked at her mournfully, and said nothing. The pale cheeks with the hectic flush reddening a small spot of each, the sunken eyes, the emaciated form, silenced him.

"Do you think you can find me some quiet place, where I shall never be found?" As she asked him this her eyes were fixed eagerly upon him, as if to hide were her only wish.

"You expect to be searched for, then?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied, shuddering; "but I will never go back. I have trusted to your honour, Mr. Griffiths. You will never betray me?"

"But surely your friends——"

"I have none. Oh, sir, you will not betray me?" She half rose as she asked this question in a terrified voice.

"No; never!" he said; and she sank back, satisfied.

"But let us see what you want to do. Your safest place to remain in is here. No one can suspect your presence here, and I can look after you, and try to make you comfortable. I am old enough to be your father, you know," he added, with a smile, as she seemed about to remonstrate. "By-the-bye, I suppose you have no money?"

"No, no. I *could* not take any. I *brought* none."

"Then you must let me be your banker. No thanks. I don't think you will be very extravagant, and I have plenty; at least,"—he corrected himself, as his poor room seemed to give the lie to his statement—"plenty for my style of life."

"Oh! I had forgotten all about money," said Kathleen, in a bewildered manner, "but I cannot take yours—I cannot."

"My dear Mrs. Dillon," said the other,
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gruffly, "that question is settled. We mustn't have any nonsense about that. You must live. Yes, you must, though you do shake your head ; and to live, you must eat ; and to eat, you must pay ; and to pay, you must have money. There's the argument complete ; so own yourself defeated, and say no more about it."

"How kind you are," said Kathleen, and again he bent his ungainly figure over her little hand.

And so it came to pass that Kathleen lived quietly and unsuspected in a back street in Dublin, while Griffiths, the Stoic, looked after her with more than a father's care. He was a strange man, and Kathleen could never discover in what rank of life he properly was. At times, his want of education astonished her, while the next moment she wondered at the shrewd knowledge of the world that issued from his lips. He affected to despise feeling, and yet feeling held

more sway over him than over many extra-sensitive men. Full of philosophic contempt for all that was noble or sentimental, his sentiment was all-powerful, and his nobility was unbounded and natural. It seemed to Kathleen that he was living as it were in hiding; but he never revealed to her anything concerning himself or his mode of life. It was natural enough that a strong affection should spring up between these two; without the debt of gratitude she owed him, she would have liked his quaint, honest manner, and he absolutely doted upon the pretty child whose life he had been, he believed, the means of saving. Quite content to let things go on as they were—for his dreary lodging was a home-heaven to him now—he never pressed her to make any efforts to go back to her relations, nor asked questions concerning them. Kathleen busied herself during his daily absences with needle-work, and insisted upon contributing her

share to the household expenses. Griffiths—whether he sold her handiwork or not—always made believe to have done so, and returned triumphantly to his evening repast, bearing the money he said he had received therefrom.

Kathleen's health meanwhile improved as the warm weather came on; and she was wont to take short walks towards evening about the environs of Dublin, and in streets where she thought there was no chance of encountering any one who knew her. Miserable though her life must sound, after the luxury of Ballytobin, it was not wholly an unhappy one. True, at times the recollection of her husband, and the love she had hoped to gain, made her cry for death; but the necessity of appearing cheerful before her benefactor, who came in sometimes apparently wearied out with his day's work, and the needlework that she deemed indispensable to the carrying on of their

little establishment, roused her, and prevented her from brooding too much over her sorrows.

One day, Griffiths found her in the evening, on his return, in a state of nervousness and excitement that he could not account for. At last, he asked her.

“Oh, Stoic!” she said—he had taught her to call him *Stoic*—“I saw some one I know to-day.”

“Did he see you?” asked Griffiths, quickly; he had begun to dread the day when she would be taken from him.

“No; but I only turned down a bye street just in time. If Father Murphy had seen me——”

“Father Murphy? the man who was at Ballybragh?”

“Yes. He is there still, I think.”

“Did he often go to Dublin when you were at Ballytobin?”



"Never, as far as I know," said Kathleen, wondering.

"Then he has come for a purpose. He must be looking for you."

"Looking for me! Oh, he will find me, he is so clever. Save me, Stoic! save me!" and the terrified girl clung to his arm as if the priest had already appeared to claim her.

"He could not make you go with him," said Griffiths.

"Yes, yes, he could. He could do anything with me. He would make me go back, and I could not bear it, to see Tom's eyes fixed on me with hatred. No, no; I could not bear it!"

"I know this priest well," said Griffiths, after a pause; "and I think I could put him off the scent. What do you say to being killed?"

"Being what?" asked Kathleen, her eyes opening wide.



“Oh, nothing; but I’ve got an idea, which it’s too late to tell you. You’re looking quite worn out with that blessed needlework. Do stop it and go to bed. I’m off!”

“Oh!” cried she, “but I must get this bit done, or we shall have no supper to-morrow. You said so!”

“Ah, yes,” he said, smiling down at the eager, upturned face. “Well, we must have supper to-morrow; only it will be no good if you have no appetite to eat it. Good night!”

Next morning he asked her to give him a pocket-book she was accustomed to carry, and the shawl he had found her in. She gave them, wondering; but he was in one of his silent and melancholy moods, and she forbore to question him as to his plans with regard to her. She placed full confidence in him, and felt sure that he would save her from the priest and a return to the



husband who, she was convinced, hated her. There were times, nevertheless, when she half hoped that some accident might send her back to Ballytobin,—one sight of Tom's face would have been so sweet to her,—but then the recollection of his coldness, his preference for his sister, her own uselessness, and the apparent restraint she brought upon them both; Emily's cold rebuke and haughty contempt of her folly; the priest's urgings in the name of religion, came upon her, and she said to herself—"No, no! Better a thousand times, death! I can always love him, but I will never see him more."

"Well," said Griffiths, a few days afterwards, as he entered the little room where he was sure of finding a smile for welcome, "it's all right. I met Father Murphy in the street, and I killed you effectually."

"Do you mean to say you pretended I was dead?"

"Yes; I saw no better way of making

your secret safe. He did not believe me at first, and wanted proofs. I showed him your pocket-book and shawl, which I said you had given me on your deathbed, and I have promised to meet him to-morrow, tell him further particulars, and, if necessary, go with him to Ballytobin to repeat my story to Mr. Dillon. Have I done wrong, Kathleen?"

Kathleen did not answer for a moment; she seemed immersed in thought. Then she said—

"No, Stoic; I think you have done right. It will, as you say, make my wretched secret—the secret of my life—safe. But I am sorry you should have had to lie——"

"Oh, that don't matter a bit," interrupted he; "a lie more or less makes no difference to me!"

"But you never do tell a lie?" persisted she.

"No, no—perhaps not; but that doesn't

prove I have any objection to it. I have often told you that I despise honour, and——”

“And are the most honourable man I ever saw. But we wont talk philosophy now, Stoic. Do you really think you shall go to Ballytobin?”

“Yes; the priest seems anxious there should be no doubt on the subject. I told him I could bring no proofs, as you were buried as a Fenian, and in a burying-place of our own; but I daresay he'll manufacture the proofs, as he is so keen about it.”

“But why,” said Kathleen, bewildered, “why should he wish me dead?”

“Some confounded Jesuitical plot of his, I suppose.”

“And the Fenians! What have you to do with them?”

“Well, I believe I am supposed to be one. I joined them last year, out of

love for James—I mean, for the purpose of studying human nature under a new aspect.”

“But do you think your proofs will be sufficient to convince my — my husband?”

“Yes, joined with the priest.”

“I can’t see what should make you suppose he——”

“I don’t suppose. I know he is determined to prove you dead, whether you are dead or no. His face lit up when I told him; and he at once decided the proofs would be forthcoming, although I told him I had none.”

“What can be his reason?” said Kathleen, to herself.

“A bad one, I’ll be sworn,” answered the Stoic, placing a chair at the table for her whom he always persisted in calling his ‘little guest.’”

“Well, Stoic, what you said will not be

false long. I feel I shall not be able to get through the cold of another winter."

"Nonsense, child! nonsense!" said he, hastily, and somewhat gruffly. "I wish you wouldn't talk like that!"

"Ah, Stoic!" and Kathleen smiled sadly across the little table, "but it's true!"





CHAPTER VI.

AN INVITATION ACCEPTED.

THE fit that struck Dillon so suddenly down when he heard of his wife's death proved to be paralytic, and it was some weeks before it was known for certain whether he would ever be able to use his right arm and leg again. However, a naturally strong constitution, with which he had taken but few liberties, and his youth, were in his favour, and in a month's time he was again walking about his place without assistance. But his mind was much weakened, and his buoyancy of spirits, which had left him for so long, had now departed, it seemed, for ever. He was never seen to smile, and he began more

and more to depend upon Father Murphy, who was always at his elbow, for everything. Emily did her best to combat this influence, which she felt was an evil one, but in vain : with her, associating her in his mind with his wife's flight, he was testy and authoritative.

Father Murphy had needed to bring forward few proofs of Kathleen's death. He produced her pocket-book and shawl, which Tom recognised at once, and a letter from Griffiths, asserting that he had seen her die.

"What reason have I for disbelieving it?" he said to Emily when, on one occasion, she had doubted it. "My heart tells me it is true. I have killed her by my infamous conduct. I cannot talk of it," and from that moment he always refused obstinately to enter upon the subject with her. He was in that desponding state that often drives men to suicide ; unless indeed they are convinced that there is a hereafter of punish-



ment worse than all the hell of remorse and despair here. Tom tried now to live in a dream of the past; but, like all others who have so tried, he failed utterly. The present is all-powerful; and indeed of his past with Kathleen, there was but little he could look back upon with pleasure—only that short month at the cottage at Grenald; and even then he had tired of her!

His agent began to complain that it was impossible for him to manage the property properly, if Father Murphy was allowed to interfere with all he did; and though Tom was roused for the time and said, angrily, that he would have no interference between them in the matter, it ended by the priest's having his way, and the agent resigning his place in disgust. Father Murphy then appointed a creature of his own. Emily shuddered as she saw how powerful he was becoming. The summer wore on, and the priest began to urge upon Dillon that the

time for mourning had expired, and that though he might be still as inconsolable for his loss as at first, it was his duty, in his position, to go out and see something of the gentry in the neighbourhood.

“I suppose you’d like me to accept this?” said Tom, one day, with a sneer, tossing to the priest a letter he had just received. With a stealthy glance at Tom’s face, the latter opened and read it. It ran :—

“DEAR MR. DILLON,—Though I have not, as yet, the pleasure of your acquaintance, I venture to write and ask you to form one of our party on Monday next, and to stay till Saturday. My husband has so many duties in England, that I fear we seem of late years to have neglected Rosemore. We regret our inability to come to it all the more, now that we wish to make the acquaintance of the neighbours whom we ought to know. I knew your father and

mother very well, and have often been at Ballytobin—perhaps that will be an inducement to you to come? We have but a small party. Lord Rosemore begs that I will give you his remembrance. He has not seen you since you were a little boy.

“Believe me,

“Yours very truly,

“CATHERINE ROSEMORE.”

“Why not?” asked the priest, putting the letter back into its monogrammed and coroneted envelope.

“Why not? Do you know my wife has not been dead three months? Why not, indeed?” Tom spoke angrily.

Murphy replied, smoothly—

“You mean you have only heard of her death three months. She has been dead nine.”

“Well? and nine years will not suffice me to mourn for her,” replied Tom, fiercely.

"My poor friend, I know it," said the priest; "but I own I think it is due to your father's old friends, the Rosemores, who have only come to this county for a short stay, that you should accept their invitation. You see there is no party there."

"No; but why should I go, and grin and smile, and make a fool of myself for nothing? Do you suppose they care whether I come or not? No; I shall certainly not go."

"Well, I think you're wrong. Of course, it isn't for me to dictate what you should do."

"I should think not," muttered Tom, with an angry gesture.

"But I own I think," went on the priest, "that when the only friends your father ever really had in the county—for he was a reserved and odd man, as I have often heard—come here for a short stay, and invite you, as his son, to pay them a visit, you owe it to his memory to go."

"Nonsense, Murphy," said Tom: "they don't look at it in this sentimental light. Nonsense!"

"It seems to me that Lady Rosemore's letter shows that she exactly *does* look at it in this light. But, of course, you know best."

Tom opened and re-read the letter. "It's such an infernal nuisance going," said he at last, "but if you really think——"

"I really think you will be treating both the Rosemores and your father's memory with disrespect if you don't go," put in the priest.

"Well, I don't see it a bit; but perhaps it may please them. It can do no harm; and my present life cannot be made much more wretched. Yes; I will go, Murphy."

"Ah," said the priest, in a tone of perfect indifference, as he took up a book.

"Why, hang it! I thought you were so keen about my going?" cried Tom.

"Was I? Well, if I was, it was only because I thought it better for you. As for me, I would, of course, rather you stayed here. My house is not so lively that I like being alone there."

"Oh, but you had better come up here as usual, while I am away, and dine with my sister."

"I don't think Miss Dillon would care about that," said the priest, smiling. "I wish I knew why she detests me so?"

"She doesn't detest you."

"But I know she does. I am not given to fancying such things."

"Well, at any rate, you can accept *my* invitation."

"Thank you, Dillon; no. I never go where I am not wanted. I shall not come here while you are away."

"As you please," said Tom, wearily, and their conversation dropped.

Soon after this he told his sister of his

invitation to Rosemore Castle, and intimated that he thought he should go.

“Oh, Tom,” said she, surprised. “Go *now*?”

“Yes, why not?” said he, testily.

“Well, I thought it rather soon; but, perhaps—at any rate, you know best.”

“I suppose I do; but I can’t understand what you mean? Soon! Do you suppose any amount of time will lessen my sorrow for the loss of my darling? If I am to go nowhere till I have forgotten her, I shall never leave Ballytobin again. And as to its being soon, it is soon since we heard the terrible news, but it is not soon after the actual event. But you think I ought not to go?”

“There’s no *ought* about it. I shouldn’t go if I were you, that’s all.”

“It’s very hard to tell what one would do if one were somebody else. I consider that I owe some respect to my father’s old

friends; and I shall go, unless you very much object."

"Oh, Tom, what right have I to object to what you do? Heaven knows I have urged you to go about a little and shake off this melancholy lethargy you seem to be in. But Rosemore Castle——"

"Well, why not Rosemore Castle?"

"They are sure to have a house full."

"On the contrary, Lady Rosemore particularly says that there is no one there. I knew perfectly well, Emily, that you would oppose my wish to go. It appears now that I may do nothing in my own house without the consent of you or the priest. I suppose I shall have to ask Pat Doolan's permission next!"

And with this little outburst of totally irrational ill-temper, he left the room, while Emily sat down with a sigh, to the contemplation of the household books.

How much easier it seems to be for a

woman than for a man to "suffer and be strong!" Without *action* a man is a child in a grief: woman rises to the occasion, and lives through it with a firmness and patience almost incomprehensible. A girl who would scream at the sight of a mouse, and fly, terror-stricken, from a wasp, will bear with Spartan endurance lingering trials and long agonies that would drive a hero to madness or the bottle. Oh, spectacled champions of women's rights, we do not need your speeches nor your pamphlets to show us where you are our superiors!

So Tom made up his mind that he would make a break in his life of seclusion by re-pairing to the lordly castle of the Rosemores, situate some twenty miles from Ballytobin. It was amusing in his next interview with Father Murphy to see how he ignored all that had previously passed on the subject between them; and indeed, assumed that the priest would endeavour to dissuade him



from his projected visit. He was in a queer frame of mind, and it only required a little opposition to send him into any given direction. Consequently, the priest began to find objections to his going. Rent-day was coming; he had promised to superintend the building of a new farm shed, &c. &c., until at last Tom was worked up to such a pitch of exasperation that he actually longed for the day when he could start for Rosemore. A reaction came over him, and he startled Emily by his projects of pleasure—going again to London, filling his house with people. He did not really mean what he said, but the sight of her melancholy face sickened him. He felt that he must forget his sorrow for the time or go mad; and, moreover, it amused him to see her look of astonishment and horror at his wild outbursts of gaiety.

The priest rubbed his hands and chuckled and wrote many letters to Dublin, to which

he received long and apparently most interesting answers.

Just after Tom had started, with post horses, for his visit, Emily, who had been seeing him off, met the priest as she crossed the front hall. She stopped him as he tried to pass her with a bow, and said, haughtily—

“And what is the reason of this new move, sir?”

“New move?” said the priest, as if not comprehending her.

“Yes; sending my brother off on this extraordinary visit?”

“Really, Miss Dillon, I see nothing very extraordinary in his visiting his father’s old friend. And you mistake. *I* had nothing to do with it. You yourself must have heard me trying to dissuade him from it?”

“Yes; but you knew that was the very way to decide him upon it. What is your reason for it, I ask?”

“I do not understand you, Miss Dillon.



Pardon me now, I am pressed for time. Good morning." And with a courteous bow, he passed her and through the hall-door.

"I will foil him yet," muttered Emily between her teeth, as she turned away from his departing figure.





CHAPTER VII.

THE ROSEMORE TRAP.

ROSEMORE CASTLE would have been a charming place, did it not always present the dreary aspect of the neglected. When "the family"—as the tenants for miles around were wont awefully to designate Lord and Lady Rosemore and their sons and daughters—came there, which was about once every five years for a month, everything was hurriedly rubbed up and put to rights. The inside of the house had the uncomfortable appearance of just having come out of brown holland: the chairs looked as if they had never been sat in; and the carpets showed unmistakably that but few feet had

trod them. Then there was a smell of paint and varnish ; for much was always done at the last moment when the family announced their intended visit, and a lingering carpenter or two was generally to be heard knocking in the distance, even after they had arrived. The grounds, too, always presented the appearance of having been hastily redeemed from a state of savageness. Unless you kept upon the broad gravel walks nearest the house, you came upon wildernesses of weeds. Part of a fine park had been made more profitable by turning it into plough, and trees lying scattered on all sides showed that his Lordship's exchequer did not disdain to be replenished by his seldom-seen Irish oaks.

The family always came, as they said, to have a month's *real* quiet, and to look after the poor people ; but as Lord Rosemore could not do without a few of his toadies, her Ladyship was miserable unless she had

some people to talk scandal with, and the girls peremptorily refused to move, unless five or six of their London "partners" were asked to follow them. The result was that a very considerable party assembled, on the occasion of their visits, in the half-barn, half-barrack looking mansion that was honoured, *à l'Irlandaise*, with the title of Rosemore Castle.

Lord Rosemore would have been much offended and surprised had any one called him an absentee landlord; and, indeed, when Irish subjects were under discussion in the House of Lords he was always listened to with great respect and deference on the subject. He was absolutely and entirely ignorant of anything connected with Ireland, however, and knew nothing of his own property but what Mr. Steward, his worthy agent, told him. Thus, when on one occasion, some noble lord, with more candour than discretion, hinted that nearly



the whole population of the south of Ireland were Fenians at heart, Lord Rosemore got great *kudos* from the Liberal party, and immense praise from the press of that party in England and Ireland, by jumping up in his place, and indignantly denying the groundless insinuations of the noble lord who had just sat down. "What!" he cried, bursting with enthusiasm, "shall the most loyal people under the sun be so horribly maligned? I am an Irish landlord, and speak with authority when I say that there is not a peasant in Leinster who will not feel with pain, and resent with indignation, the extraordinary assertions we have just heard."

It is a curious fact, however, that when Lord Rosemore wrote to his agent to make a few (rather late) inquiries on this subject, he revealed to no one the purport of his answer; and seemed somewhat embarrassed afterwards when allusion was made to his



“crushing rejoinder” to Lord —. A generous-hearted, open-minded man, he was not to be blamed for caring more for his prosperous estates in England, than for the badly-tilled five-acre farms of Tipperary (for he was a great farmer). He placed implicit trust in Mr. Steward, who was a conceited, bragging, ignorant scoundrel, with all the will to rob him, and just intellect enough to make his name unpopular by petty acts of oppression and unreasonable severity, which his master would have scorned had he known of them.

However, a certain “demonstration” was always got up on the occasion of his Lordship’s visit, and the Irish press teemed for weeks after his arrival with paragraphs headed, “A noble landlord,” “What an Irish landlord should be,” “Great rejoicing at Rosemore Castle,” and always ended by a fulsome piece of flattery of the “worthy and highly-popular agent, Mr. James Grimston Steward.”



Mr. James Grimston Steward wrote a book, indeed, to prove what a fine fellow he was: filled it with stories entirely untrue—but his wife had a grand imagination!—and succeeded so well that it went through several editions, and was quoted right and left, in Parliament and outside, as a trustworthy history of Irish customs and feeling.

No wonder Lord Rosemore thought he was lucky to have such an agent, and was thoroughly pleased when, at his tenants' dinner, he heard the cheers ringing in his ears. Had he known the price of those ebullitions of enthusiasm, perhaps his pleasure might have been less; but as it was, all "went merry as a marriage bell," and Mr. Steward got up, his hand upon his heart, and declared that the only wish of his life was to please so noble a landlord, and to merit any poor popularity he might have by making his tenants the happiest and most prosperous in Ireland.

Lord Rosemore, although he was, as I have said, a generous-minded man, had many great defects. He was inordinately fond of flattery—not fulsome adulation, that was quite apparently undeserved, but such as he considered in his own mind that he was entitled to; and as he thought himself a very clever, a very handsome, and in every way a very great man, there were very few kinds of praise to which he did not think himself justly entitled. It was amusing to see the air of frank candour with which he threw away any scraps of flattery that he did not think quite warranted; keeping all the time large lumps of the same article with a calm consciousness of desert. If you had assured him that he was the greatest speaker, the greatest writer, the best-looking man, and the most graceful slider in the world, he would have said, hurriedly, and as if anxious not to take merit when it was not due—

“Oh, no! I am not the ‘most graceful slider!’”

Lady Rosemore there is no need to describe. She was a good mother in the “Fashionable Society” sense of the word—that is, she had married four of her daughters to rich men, and would have married her children willingly to gorillas, if they had good accounts at their bankers’. The result of her generalship had already shown itself in the trifle of the divorce of her eldest daughter (one of her greatest achievements had been this marriage); but she had come up smiling after the blow, and was ready to run the risk again with any of the dear ones still on her hands.

To do them justice, they backed her up in her campaigns most thoroughly, and showed most edifying indifference as to whether their future partners in life were young or old, ugly or handsome, as long as they were *rich*. These convenient young

ladies were four in number, but the only one with whom we shall have anything to do was the eldest—a tall, handsome, but cold-looking girl, about twenty-three years old, and by name Lady Alice Rose.

Lady Alice was supposed to be very sweet tempered, because she neither said disagreeable things of her friends, nor ever flew into a passion. She was certainly very proud of her rank and beauty; but she was, as her mother well knew, ready to sacrifice both for the far more enduring quality of wealth. She had a way, lacked by her sisters, of appearing, without saying much, to take an interest in the pursuits of the man she was talking to, that had made her popular with the other sex. In person she was tall, her features were regular, the little expression she had was amiable; her figure was the delight of her dressmaker, and her manner of clothing it the delight of all her friends. She sang well—that is, she had a

fine voice, and had been well taught; but where pathos or sweetness were required, she would have driven a real artiste to madness.

When Tom arrived at Rosemore Castle he found it full of many guests, and was annoyed to discover that his long retirement had had the effect of making him shy and uncomfortable among these London dandies and fine ladies. He felt like a fish out of water; understood none of their mutual jokes and endless chaff: the men treating him as a country bumpkin, and the women taking no notice of him at all; and when he went up to his room to dress on the first night after his arrival, he was much inclined to plead business, and return to Ballytobin the next morning. However, he went to bed in a different frame of mind, as Lady Alice devoted herself to him all the evening, became so confidential indeed, that he had already asked for, and received her sympathy



for his bereavement. In the smoking-room, over their cigars and strong drinks, he had discovered, too, that the men were very good fellows after all, and his week at Rosemore seemed to promise to pass pleasantly enough.

Next morning, after breakfast, he found himself, *how* he knew not, strolling alone with Lady Alice in the shrubbery, and again receiving her kind condolence for his unhappy position.

"I know what you feel," she said, "and I can understand how all this foolish noise and laughter must jar upon you. It does upon me, and I am fancy free," she added, with a laugh which he thought had, however, some sadness in it. "You must not think me vain and frivolous, Mr. Dillon, because you see me joining in it. I have been brought up to it, and cannot help myself; but I need scarcely tell *you* how I long to end it all, for fashion and



society and all that nonsense palls upon me."

"Fashion would cease to be fashion, and society society if you left it," said Tom, gallantly, remarking, with a certain pleasure he could not understand, the slight emphasis she had put on the word *you*.

"Oh, no! Mr. Dillon. I begin to think sometimes I am somewhat of a wet blanket at home. My mind is too serious to be always thinking of balls and dresses. But I don't know why I am boring you with all this about myself," she said, with a laugh. "You don't want my confidence much, I fancy. Let us go in and join them at billiards."

"No," said Tom; "that is, not unless you wish to—for there is nothing I like better than——" He hesitated.

"You like talking seriously? I thought you did; for directly you came I could not help seeing that you were something different to all the rest of the men here. I

don't know how it is, but I feel already—though we met for the first time yesterday—as if I had known you for ages.”

“I shall take advantage of such acquaintance then,” said Tom, looking pleased, despite his melancholy, “to propose a walk round the park. You have nothing to do before lunch?”

“Well, I have some letters to write, but they can keep. Yes; let us go into the park.”

Of course Tom was pleased at her giving up her letters for him, more especially as she took care to inform him that usually *nothing* could tear her away from her morning correspondence. Once let a woman make a man believe that she looks upon him in a different light to her other male acquaintances, and, unless he is a very wary and experienced customer, she has him! I have said Lady Alice was a clever girl. Cold as ice, and deceitful to a degree, she



had, by experience, mastered thoroughly the difficult *art de plaire*, and no wonder Tom came in from his walk saying to himself that she was the most agreeable and sensible girl he had ever met. Nothing more. She had a mind above her fellows: she understood his feelings, and sympathized with them. Her tact was so exquisite, she could trip over the most delicate ground without a touch of pain. Yes, she was certainly charming, and he was lucky to have so quickly found such a friend.

"I was wrong in my notions of London girls," he thought to himself, as he tied his white tie that evening with uncommon care: it is only to him that looks no further than the surface that they are so frivolous and light minded. One must always look beneath," and, so sagely arguing, poor fellow! he gave the last twist to the knot of snowy linen, and proceeded to the drawing-room.



It boots not to tell how he gradually and gently, during his stay at Rosemore Castle, fell into the snare set for him by the fair fingers of her Ladyship and her eldest daughter. Suffice it, that he did fall into it, and, as he drove back to Ballytobin, found himself thinking how well she suited him, and how pleasantly they should get on together, if—his loyalty rebelled before his thoughts put this into words. “No!” he thought, “the memory of my lost^d darling is enough for me. This is folly. I have met a nice girl of a class where I thought no niceness was, and I am so astonished that I want to make a fool of myself. Folly!”

But he did not really think it such utter folly as he pretended to himself; and when after his long^d drive he reached home, and found Emily, sad and severe in countenance, alone to greet him, the feeling that he might “do worse” came more strongly still upon him.

"Is Murphy going to dine?" he asked, when he had paid a visit to the stables, and done the many little things that a country gentleman has to do after an absence from home.

"Not that I know of," said Emily.

"Hasn't he dined here while I have been away?"

"No."

"You haven't asked him, I suppose?"

"I didn't think he required an invitation, and, to tell the truth, I did not much care about his coming."

"How prejudiced you are, Emily!"

"I don't know that I am more so than other people. I certainly do not like or trust that man."

"And yet he is almost my only friend now."

"Friend!"

"Yes; my friend. But of course I cannot expect a woman to alter her likes or dislikes for any reason whatsoever."

"Suppose I have reason to distrust him?"

"We will suppose anything you please; but I shall stroll down to his house and ask him up. You have no objection, I suppose?"

"Of course not," said Emily, sadly, and Tom departed on his errand of invitation.

The priest sate late with Tom Dillon that night, smoking. Accidentally, or perhaps not, the conversation turned on second marriages.

"Of course, *you* will never marry again?" said the priest.

"Why not?" asked Tom, somewhat impatiently.

"You would be angry if I told my reason," said the priest, smiling.

"No. Why should I be? I should like to hear it."

"Miss Dillon wouldn't let you!"

"Let me! I don't understand you, Murphy."

"And yet what I said is pretty clear. Miss Dillon, like all women—small blame to them—likes managing, likes being head of a household. Your first marriage interfered with her; you know the end of that! Your second marriage would not be likely to be more agreeable to her."

"You mistake her, Murphy," said Tom, quickly. "You quite misunderstand her character. I believe, from my heart, that her only wish is to see me happy and comfortable. She is the least selfish woman in the world; and as to my marriage—I see you smile—you don't believe me?"

"Of course, I believe you, Dillon. At least, I believe you think what you say."

"It is the simple truth."

"Well, try her. Hint to her that you are thinking of marrying."

"But I am not!"

"Never mind. Hint to her that you are, and see what she says. I may be wrong—I

hope so. So you intend always to live as you are doing now?"

"I did not say that."

"No; but you said you were not thinking of marrying, and under the circumstance, perhaps, you are right; though I must own that I think you would be a happier man if you had a ladylike wife to sit at your table, receive your guests, and make your house rather less—shall I say, melancholy—than it has been for some time."

Soon after this Father Murphy rose to go; but his words had made an impression upon Tom, and he walked through the darkness to his house with a smile upon his lips.

When Tom, hating himself for taking the priest's advice, hinted to his sister that it was possible he might some day bring home a new mistress to Ballytobin, Emily was almost too astonished to say anything; but when she did speak it was to warn him



against doing a thing of such importance in haste (she guessed pretty accurately at the "she" of whom he was thinking, as he had talked much of Lady Alice since his return); and was eloquent as to the effects of his taking to wife a grandee—a London flirt—one who would probably hate a country life; or perpetually fill the house with a crowd of London visitors without morals—for Emily firmly believed that all evil comes from our metropolis.

Tom was angry, and they had almost high words.

The priest came more to the house than ever, and gradually brought Tom to believe that marriage was a duty he owed to society and to his position. At last a second invitation, couched in kind and almost familiar terms, arrived from Lady Rosemore, which he accepted without a moment's hesitation. He was flattered on arrival by finding that they really were

alone; he was the only one in the house who was not of the family. Even Lord Rosemore took the trouble to be civil and attentive to him, and honoured him with his views on the Irish question.

Lady Rosemore was kindness itself, and treated him with an affection almost maternal—of course, because of her old friendship with his mother.

Lady Alice was more charming than ever, and took the greatest interest in all concerning him, even down to a new farm building he had avowed contemplating to her. It was wonderful how often her younger sisters had to leave the room to fetch things, when he and Lady Alice were sitting talking there; and it was equally wonderful how often Lady Rosemore would enter hurriedly, and then, seeing them, turn with a little cough, and depart precipitately.

Three weeks passed—a month—and he was still there, enjoying himself, getting

more and more to like the society of Lady Alice, but as far from being *in love* with her as on the first day they met.

At last a message came to Tom that Lord Rosemore wished to see him in his study. As he was proceeding thither, her Ladyship's maid met and begged him first to come to her mistress's boudoir. He complied, wondering what it was all about. He found Lady Rosemore seated at her writing table, smelling strongly of scent, and the blind of the window down behind her. In the dim light she looked quite as handsome as any of her daughters. Tom had never been admitted to this sanctum of hers before, and was somewhat awed by its dark solemnity.

"Sit down, Mr. Dillon," said her Ladyship, waving her be-ringed hand to point out a chair. "His Lordship has sent to speak to you, I think?"

"Yes, Lady Rosemore," said Tom, sitting



on the edge of his chair, and feeling very uncomfortable.

“Then I mustn’t keep you, as he hates to be kept waiting. You can guess what he wants to say, I daresay?” She smiled, and Tom looked bewildered.

“No,” he said; “unless—oh, yes—unless it’s about the new conservatory. He asked me whether——”

“No, Mr. Dillon,” said Lady Rosemore, looking solemn; “it is *not* about the conservatory; although, I daresay, *in future*, that he will take your advice on many points. It is about our dear child.”

“About—about—Lady Alice,” stammered Tom, as the light began to break in upon him.

“Yes, about Alice. Now, you know what he is going to say?” She paused, but he spoke not, and she was forced to continue—

“He is going to say that we—I and he

—have observed your attentions to our dear child with some anxiety, but, I own to you, also with some pleasure. We know you to be all that we could possibly ask for in a son-in-law; but at one time we feared that the melancholy brought on—so naturally!—by your great misfortunes, would have almost unfitted you to make her as happy as she deserves. I see now that our fears were groundless. God bless you, Mr. Dillon! Go now. God bless you!”

“But, Lady Rosemore,” began Tom, as she wrung his hand with tears in her eyes, “I——”

“Go now, dear—*dear* Mr. Dillon. I hear his Lordship’s bell again. Go now. Come back to me when you leave him.” And before he could speak Tom found himself in the presence of the Peer.

“Ha! Dillon,” he said, getting up from his chair, and putting on an extra amount of starchedness to cover his shyness—for



men are always shy at this sort of thing—then plunging *in medias res*, he went on—

“Her Ladyship has told me all about it. Of course, we both had remarked your attention to Alice. I was inclined to think there was nothing in it. Of course, we all know that young men will flirt—I did it myself; but her Ladyship is always right about these things. She is a very good, clever girl, Dillon; though I am her father, I will say so; and she will make you happy. If you had been a fine gentleman now, I don’t know that she would have suited you. Her sphere is naturally the country—doing good among the poor, looking after a moderate household, and—and so on. I cannot imagine a position she is so well fitted for as your wife; and you will be a good husband to her. Of course, you will. Don’t tell me so. I know it”—(as Tom tried vainly to get in a word, for he was angry and indignant). “Of course, there will be some

little business matters to settle: that we must do later. I have no fear of difficulty in that. Alice has no great fortune you are, of course, aware; but she has as much as girls in her position generally have, and I know your feeling on the subject. I won't bother you any more now. We understand each other. Good luck to you, my dear boy! Good luck to you! You'll find Alice in the garden. I saw her there just now. I won't bother you any more. We shall meet at lunch."

So saying, with a pleasant smile, he touched the bell, and the butler, who must have been very close to the keyhole, entered. Tom was boiling over with rage, but had not been able to get in a word. Furious, he entered the drawing-room, but there was no one there. Going through one of the long windows that opened upon the terrace, he walked hurriedly down the stone steps that led to the shrubbery, and turning a

corner, came suddenly upon Lady Alice, the picture of misery. Through all his anger he was struck by her look of desolation, and asked her what was the matter.

"Oh, Mr. Dillon," she cried, "I am too miserable. I don't know what you will think of me. But when papa and mamma take anything into their heads, there is no gain-saying them. It is all a mistake—all a mistake—and, humiliating though it must be to me, I will at once put them right. It is too horrible! What must you think of me?"

Tom looked at her for a moment, and as he looked, his anger evaporated. She was one of those few women who are improved in appearance by crying, and the earnestness of her grief seemed unmistakable. A wondrous actress she was!

"Don't undeceive them at all," said Tom, after a moment's pause. "Let it be as they think it is. You will?"



Lady Alice looked up at him through her tears, which gave an unusual softness to her grey eyes.

"It is of your own accord?" she whispered.

"Yes," said Tom; but he winced as he said it.

The remainder of their stay in the garden was taken up by the explanation of "this extraordinary mistake" of her parents. She had confided to her mamma that she—she liked Mr. Dillon; and whether it was that she was indistinct, or that her mother was slightly deaf, she knew not; but her Ladyship had insisted on imagining that he had proposed, and had told his Lordship. They had been so pleased, for they were *very* fond of him, that she had not found time to explain.

"You know how difficult it is to get in a word," she said, "and thus this terrible mistake had come about."



It was a very confused explanation ; but what lover could expect his mistress to be quite coherent ten minutes after he had made the great proposal.

Tom's anger at the way in which he had been entrapped melted before the sunshine of Lady Alice's smiles, and ere long the graciousness of Lord Rosemore, and the affability of his wife, had swept away the last remnant of it. He certainly built none of the airy castles of love that he had run up when he wooed and won Kathleen, but he said to himself a thousand times a day that he had, after all, done a wise thing—he ignored that it had been done for him,—and should be very happy with his aristocratic, if somewhat haughty bride. In his inmost heart he liked the idea of being so nearly allied to the Rosemores, who were great people everywhere, but especially great people in his county ; and the quiet, his future wife had so often told him she adored,

promised a calm, magisterial life for him in future. Then the thought that it would never have done for the Dillons to become extinct, and for Ballytobin to pass into the hands of strangers, decided him that he had indeed done very right. He did not write to Emily, as he wished to bear the news to her himself; but, of course, when he reached home, a week after his proposal and its premature acceptance, he found that the tidings had preceded him, and that every one—from Tim Doolan to the last joined plough-boy—knew all about it.

“Long life to yer honour! When do you bring her Ladyship home?” said Tim Doolan, as he welcomed his master in the hall. Even the new footman from England, who looked upon Ireland as a barbarous country, where wages did not make up for want of society, smiled feebly as he surveyed his master.

“My dear Tom,” said Emily, rising, as he

entered the drawing-room, "I hope I am not quite the last to congratulate you; but you might have written to tell me?"

"I had nothing to tell you a week ago, my dear," said Tom, kissing her, "and I did not think you would any of you have heard it. I wanted to be the first to tell you. You don't disapprove my choice?"

"No, dear Tom," said Emily, smiling kindly. "Why should I? But you know I have never seen her yet."

"Ah, you will like her—I hope." He added the last two words with a slight misgiving, as his sister was not given to affection for women, and also because the one week of his engagement had given him a clearer insight than he had before into the nature of the quiet Lady Alice liked so much. But he was not a man to go back from his word, and perhaps the Rosemores knew this, or they would not have talked so openly before him of the parties, balls, and



other gay doings they would have at Ballytobin, and at the house they seemed to have decided he would of course take in London.

“And I suppose you are really happy now, Tom?” said Emily, when she had asked all the questions she could think of.

“Happy! Well, yes, I suppose so.” But he sighed as he spoke, and turned away. Why would that loving little oval face, surrounded by its dark hair, come before him so often now? and why did the violet eyes seem to look so reproachfully and sadly at him? Happy! He thought over that unlucky question of Emily’s, as he tossed upon his bed that night. “No,” he thought, “I shall never be happy again; but I can at least not be actively miserable any more.”

Father Murphy came up to the house next day, and congratulated him. “I had hoped,” he said, “that if you did marry,

you would marry one of my faith. But then," he added, laughing, "you know we priests are always hatching deep plots, and concocting mysterious intrigues."

Tom laughed. "Why, you told me you had given up such things, Murphy, since you so nearly burned your fingers in the Fenian business."

"Ah, yes; but then you see, I *am* a priest!"





CHAPTER VIII.

A DISAGREEABLE RENCONTRE.

“WELL, my little guest,” said the Stoic, as he came in to breakfast, clad in his ill-fitting rusty garments, and looking more worn and haggard than usual; “you will be glad to hear that I sold that bit of work of yours for a fabulous sum. See!—here it all is. I could scarcely carry it home. One pound seven shillings. One—two—three; stop, is that a good one?—four—five—six—seven—and ninepence. You’ll trust me in the pence without counting? and, by Jove! I nearly cheated you—a halfpenny—there!”

“You mustn’t laugh, sir, at my work!” said Kathleen, smiling rather sadly, as she



held out a little hand. Ah! so thin and transparent, to be grasped in his big palm.

"Laugh at it, my little guest! I don't know what I should do without it; or," he added, as the smile died away from his face, and he looked anxiously at her, "without you."

"Oh, Stoic, yes." And Kathleen failed in her attempt to make her words sound cheerful. "You know I am really only in your way; and I must cost you a lot of money you want for yourself. I really ought to go somewhere and shift for myself; besides, it isn't quite proper," she added, with a smile.

Griffiths rose suddenly, walked round the table to her chair, and bent over the back of it.

"My child," he said, solemnly, and she put down her cup of tea in surprise, "never talk again of going away from me. God



knows you have brought the only bit of brightness into my life that it has ever seen. God knows you, and you alone, have kept me from an act that I say to myself is not wrong, and yet which I cannot persuade myself is right."

"Oh, Stoic!" interrupted Kathleen, taking his hand, "you do not mean——"

"Never mind, dear," said he, "you *have* saved me, and that's enough. But you mustn't talk of leaving me. I am an old man, Kathleen, and I couldn't bear it—unless, indeed, you went back to your home, and I knew you would be happy."

"No, no," said Kathleen, shivering, "that can never be. You forget that I am—dead!"

Griffith's face brightened as she spoke. "Then you will never leave me?"

"No; not if you want me to stay so much. Until——"

"Until what?" said he, alarmed afresh.

"Until the end; for I feel I shall not live much longer, dear friend. All the old pains are coming back, and each morning I cough as I used to."

"But, Kathleen, you mustn't talk like that! You look fifty times stronger than you did last winter. We'll see a good doctor to-morrow, and he shall set you up. You'll be as right as a trivet again soon. Don't you think so?"

He asked the question in a half-querulous, half-eager tone, and Kathleen was forced to answer that she hoped so, and change the subject to one less gloomy. He might have read the right answer in her wasted form and hectic cheek; but Hope, like Love, is blind.

"There was something I didn't quite like, or understand, in that priest's way of taking the news of your death," said the Stoic soon after, as Kathleen gave him his hat preparatory to his starting forth on his day's

work, the nature of which she had never discovered, and, indeed, had tried but little to discover, as she had not much of the feminine quality—curiosity. “He seemed to believe it too readily. And now I come to think of it, he almost told me that, should further proof than my evidence—how I did lie for you, Kathleen!—be wanting, he would make it. I don’t half like it now I come to think of it. What reason has he for wishing you dead, or to appear to be dead?”

“I know of none, except that I had failed to do what he brought about my marriage for. Ah! I see now that it was all his doing, and that Tom never loved me. But it has been long before I could bring myself to believe it. It is so horrible.”

“My little guest,” said Griffiths, standing in the doorway with her hand in his, and something very like a tear trembling in his eye, “you must not brood over these un-



happy thoughts. You know how I pity you. I don't believe any one could help loving you; but even if it were as you suppose, you must not lose heart. Remember you have a useless but grateful old man to look after now, and I have often heard you say that God does all for the best."

"Ah," cried Kathleen, "if you would only say so, too."

He shook his head with a smile. "I am rather old and tough to convert, Kathleen: but you may try. Good-bye, my little guest. I shall be back at six."

And drawing round him the shabby cloak that he would not discard in the hottest weather, he descended the narrow staircase, and left Kathleen to her thoughts for the day. It may well be imagined that they were not very happy ones; but she had a brave heart: she believed firmly in God and in the efficacy of her prayers, and she was kept up by the thought, gathering strength

with every day, that the end was not far off.

As was her custom, when the shadows were beginning to lengthen along the dirty Dublin streets, she put on her bonnet and went out into an unfrequented quarter of the town for a short walk. She walked slowly, for any haste brought on a fit of coughing, and she seemed to have lost that graceful elasticity of carriage that had formerly shown off her slight figure to such advantage. As she turned the corner of a street she suddenly uttered a little cry of horror, and turned as if to retrace her steps. She had not gone far, however, before she was overtaken by a man who seized her arms, and turned her rudely round to face him.

"Larry!" she exclaimed, and could say no more.

"Och, begorra! if it's dead ye are, the ghosts have swate voices, I'm thinkin'. So

I've found ye, have I, Mrs. Dillon; and I've found somethin' better still."

"What?" asked Kathleen, looking as if she meditated escape.

"Just the reward. Nothin' less. I have the bill in my pocket at this minute. A thousand pounds'll settle me in life pretty comfortable. Ye ought to congratulate your brother, Mrs. Dillon," he continued, with grim pleasantry, still holding her arm and standing before her on the pavement.

"The reward! What for?"

"What for is it, me beloved sisther? What for? Och, be aisy now, an' I'll tell ye what for. Just for your own purty little self, me jewel."

"But who offered it?"

"Oh, the innocent cratur! Who offered it? Who should offer a thousand pounds for a woman but a Protestant fool loike Mr. Dillon, of Ballytobin—magistrate?" and he

took off his broad straw hat and made a mock bow.

“Oh! but Larry,” said Kathleen, in terror, “I don’t want to go back to him. He doesn’t want me back. He doesn’t, indeed. You have been away and don’t know what’s happened; but he doesn’t want me back!”

“I’ve been to America, me swate sisther, but I know pretty well what’s happened over here. Maybe, there’s a post across the say. So he doesn’t want ye back? and ye don’t want to go? But ye see there’s the sloight difficulty that I *do* want the little matther of one thousand pounds, offered in the docyment I carry next my heart. See, here it is.”

Kathleen took with trembling hands the printed paper he offered her. She saw it was dated more than a year back, and ran:—

“ One Thousand Pounds Reward.

“ NOTICE !

“ The above sum will be paid to any person who shall give information that may lead to the discovery of Mrs. Dillon, of Ballytobin, who left her home on or about the ——. Any information whatever on the subject will be liberally rewarded. She is supposed to be dressed in ——.” [Here followed a minute description of her dress and personal appearance.]

She handed it back to her brother ; who had watched as she read it, with a disagreeable smile upon his coarse malignant features. Great improvement had taken place in his dress since he last appeared upon the scene, and he looked a cross between a Yankee skipper and a Dissenting minister.

“ That bill is dated a long time back,



Larry," said Kathleen, with a hasty look of terror at his smiling face.

"But ye don't see any limitation as to toime on it, do ye, me dear. No, Mrs. Dillon, yer little stay in Doblin must come to an end now; yer lovin' brother having retorned from furrin' parts, is goin' to resthore yez to the arms of yer husband, the Justice of the Pace, and so the best ye can do is to take me arm and walk quietly to the station—and thin we'll go straight to Ballytobin to-noight."

"Oh no, Larry, no! I cannot. You know nothing of what has happened. Oh, Larry!" and she burst into tears of terror, "you cannot be so cruel!"

"Cruel is it, alannah! Cruel, to restore a woife to her husband's arms? And do ye think," he continued, still grasping her arm, and his tone changing from ironical playfulness to sudden fierceness, "do ye think I'm goin' for yer whimpering to let



a thousand pounds slip through my fingers? Come along with me: there's no one in the street, and, by Jasus! if ye croy out I'll throttle ye. Come on, I say!"

He dragged her rudely forward, and for a short distance she walked by his side without speaking. She knew that in a moment they would turn into a street where there must be people about, and did not fear his threat; but she felt that even if she got away from him all would be lost, for he had found her, and would be sure to go to Ballytobin and claim the reward. At last she spoke, calmly and clearly—

"Listen to me, Larry. I will not accompany you now to Ballytobin, and you cannot make me. The first policeman we met would release me; but I do not wish you to lose your money; though I do not believe the reward offered in that bill would hold good now. Come with me to where I live,

and we will try to arrange matters. I will swear not to try and escape."

Larry hesitated for a moment. Then he said—

"Very well. But none of yer tricks with me. Ye'll find it's difficult to make a fool of Larry O'Feolan."

They walked silently on—a curiously assorted pair—and soon reached the door of the house in which Kathleen and the Stoic lived. Larry surveyed it with a grin.

"It isn't as fine as Ballytobin," he said, and followed her up the creaking staircase.

Arrived at her door, Kathleen asked Larry to wait for one moment outside; to which he assented by a grunt, placing his heavy boot in so that the door could not be shut on him.

"You have taken a short walk to-day, little guest?" said Griffiths, as she flew into the common sitting-room.



"Oh, Stoic," she gasped out, "I've been found. There's Larry at the door!"

"Larry!" echoed he, bewildered.

"My brother! He says there's a reward, and he will have it. Oh, cannot you do something by talking to him?"

There was no time for delay, as the outer door was heard to open, and Larry approached.

"I will try, dear," said Griffiths. "Go into your bedroom, and I will call you when he is gone."

Larry started on seeing a man in the room on his entrance, but soon resumed his insolent, half-satirical manner.

"You are Mrs. Dillon's brother?" said Griffiths, abruptly.

"Well, surr, she's me sisther, if that's what ye mane," answered Larry, twirling his hat in his hand.

"You were aware of the circumstances of her having left her husband's roof?"

"Yes, surr. Roof, walls, floor, an' all the other fixings."

Griffiths appeared not to notice the other's jocularly, and went on—

"You are aware that, a year ago, a reward was offered for her discovery—a large one?"

"Very much so," answered the other, with a mock bow.

"And you are determined to claim it now?"

"If it's the same to you," and again Larry bowed, with serio-comic gravity.

"I am afraid you have been misinformed. The reward was withdrawn some time ago. You might get something for your information; but I can tell you that they are no more likely to give you a thousand pounds, or a fiftieth part of that sum, than they are to make you Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland."

Larry started.

"Be Japers! but they shall pay me.

Doesn't the docyment in my pocket say a thousand pounds for the information, and wouldn't the law make them give it me?"

"Would you allow me to look at the bill, Mr. O'Feelan? You needn't be afraid; I will give it you back. Thanks. Yes, I thought so. Can you read, Mr. O'Feelan?"

"No, surr," answered Larry, with less swagger; for he did not like the smile he saw on the other's countenance.

"I conjectured as much. If you could, you would have seen that this offer only held good for six months from its date. It is past that now, and the offer has lapsed. You see I was right, Mr. O'Feelan?"

Larry scanned vaguely the handbill which had been returned to him, and the Stoic watched him with a look of anxiety, quickly succeeded by a smile of triumph when the other looked up.

"Do ye mane to say I wont get the

money?" said Larry, hoarsely, looking from Griffiths to the handbill, and back again.

"Most certainly that is what I mean. It so happens, but your sister does not know it, that they are not anxious for her return; indeed, they would be more likely to disbelieve you on purpose than to reward you for your news. Even if you did go straight to Mr. Dillon and tell him, do you think you would find us here on your return, and do you dream they would believe you without proofs? They are fully assured of her death. You would get nothing by betraying her. Now look here. She is very anxious that her secret should be kept: she is very poor; still, as you have had some trouble to-day, and as you have been so disappointed about your imaginary thousand pounds, I am ready to offer you, in her name, a small sum of money as a present, on the condition that you swear on the book" (he picked up at random a small testament-

looking book from the table, which proved afterwards to be a manual of crochet work)—“on the book that you will never divulge the fact of your knowledge of her existence.”

“How much?” asked Larry, curtly.

“Fifty pounds.”

“Can’t you make it a hundred?”

“No; not a shilling more than what I say. She is not in your power; she is free to go where she pleases.”

He went to a desk, and in a few moments returned with a pocket-book, out of which he extracted an exceedingly dirty bundle of Irish notes.

“There is fifty here. Kiss the book and swear, and it is yours.”

Larry eyed the notes for a moment.

“How do I know there’s fifty pounds there?”

“Because I say so,” answered Griffiths, sternly; “but if there are not, your oath shall be unsworn.”

Larry took up the crochet-book, and kissing it, swore not to divulge the secret of his sister being alive, and then held out his hand for the money. As he took it, he turned away his face to conceal a smile.

"And now, sir," said Griffiths, with lofty politeness, "our business is at an end. I presume you have no wish to see Mrs. Dillon?"

"No, surr. Give her my love. But I have a fancy I might loike to see her again before the week's out. I'm goin' to America for good an' all thin, and I'd loike to say good-bye to her, for old times' sake. Will you promise not to take her away?"

"Certainly, I shall not take her away."

"I mane, she'll stay here?"

"If she can trust your solemn oath?"

"Och! I'd niver break that," and he departed.

"Oh, Stoic, you are too clever," cried Kathleen, entering the room when the outer

door had shut. "But what have you done? I believe you have given him all your savings. Oh, Stoic, you shouldn't have beggared yourself for me!" and her tears began to flow as she kissed his hand.

"Nonsense! what difference will it make in our daily income? And besides, my little guest, that fifty pounds—little enough—was meant for you. It's only gone in your service rather sooner."

"Oh, Stoic! you are so much too good for me, and you have saved me such agony. But was what you said about the six months right?"

"Yes; perfectly. Whoever read the bill to that precious fellow omitted the important part. I hope you are safe now, my child; but does not that reward look as if he had loved you, and wanted you back?"

But Kathleen did not answer; the excitement had been too great for her unstrung nerves, and she had fainted.



* * * * *

A few days later, as Father Murphy was sitting in his book-surrounded parlour, his maid-of-all-work, who believed in him as the future Pope, entered, and said that a man wanted to see 'his Riv'rence.' "

"A man!" said Father Murphy, "what man? Surely they all know that I can see no one in the morning!"

"Sure, an' I tould him, yer Riv'rence; but he said you'd see him, as he comes on important business."

"Well, show him up, Bridget," and the priest put down his book with ill-concealed annoyance.

"Yer Riv'rence wont moind seeing me," said Larry O'Feelan, following the maid into the room, "as I've something worth hearing to tell yez?"

"Larry!" exclaimed the priest. "So you've come back from America! I suppose you are still a——"



"Faynian? ivery drop of blood in my body; but it's not about that I've come to yer Riv'rence. It's about me sisther."

"Your sister! Ah, poor girl; that was a sad ending to what looked a happy life, Larry!" and the priest put his handkerchief to his eyes.

"But suppose it wasn't an ending?"

"What do you mean, Larry? I myself saw the man who tended her last moments, poor girl!"

"You mean he *said* he did," said Larry, standing before the priest, with a twinkle in his eye.

"I saw no reason to doubt it; but what do you know, Larry? Speak out, my son."

"That's what I will do, yer Riv'rence; but maybe there's a price on me words."

"A price on your words! My son, you speak in riddles. Sit down, and have a glass of whisky. Bridget!"

"No, thank yer Riv'rence! Business first,

pleasure after! as the hangman said to the convict. There's a small matter of one thousand pounds——"

"One thousand pounds was advertised a year ago as a reward for information," interrupted the priest. "It is, of course, withdrawn now. But anything you have to tell would be rewarded. What do you know of her before her death."

"Nothin' at all?"

"Then what have you come to tell me? Larry, remember you *dare* not tell me a lie!"

"Begorra! I wouldn't tell a lie to mortal man, not if he paid me for it. I've come to yer Riv'rence to tell the truth, if I'm paid for that."

"The truth pays itself, Larry. On earth, no recompense."

"I prefer havin' it now," said Larry, rising. "An' Mr. Dillon, maybe, will think my news worth it."

"Sit down, Larry. Did I say I would not pay you? I only spoke of a higher reward for truth than money. What do you know?"

"It depends on what yer Riv'rence will give."

"I never buy anything till I know its value."

"An' I never show my goods till they're bid for."

"You know something of Kathleen?"

"Do I? If I do, maybe it's her husband I should have gone to first. Good day, yer Riv'rence!"

"No, no. Well, Larry, I will give you twenty pounds for your secret."

"It's worth twice as much."

"But I can afford no more. If you will not take that, you had better go to Mr. Dillon. Good day."

"Twenty pounds is very little, Father Murphy."

"I said good day, Larry," answered the priest, curtly, and taking up his book.

"Well, your Riv'rence, will ye give it me now?"

"You shall have it directly I learn your news, on the honour of a priest. Kathleen is alive?"

"How did ye know that?" said Larry, starting.

"No matter. What I want to know is where she is to be found. That is what my twenty pounds are for."

In a few minutes, Father Murphy had extracted from Larry all he knew concerning the whereabouts and mode of living of his sister; had paid him the twenty pounds, with ten pounds more added for a promise of secrecy: so that Larry, when he walked out of the house with eighty pounds safely buttoned up in his pocket, had not made a bad thing of his chance meeting with Kathleen.

The priest chuckled at the possession of a secret that bade fair to put Dillon so completely in his power—for preparations for the latter's wedding with Lady Alice Rose were already begun—if he could only silence Larry O'Feelan's tongue. He did not believe in the Fenian's promise, and he considered the ten pounds he had given for it thrown away; but a warrant was still out for his apprehension, and he would not dare, thought the priest, appear before Dillon, who considered him the murderer of his friend Verner.

Schemes foreign to that great one of turning Dillon—if not by argument, by threats—to the true faith, passed through the cunning priest's brain as he sat and pondered. Kathleen in Dublin, poor and unhappy: her husband married to another. She could scarcely despise a love which, though it might shock her at first, would at last win her by its strength, and which would after



a time appear to be invested with the very sanctity that at first would frighten her. The hot blood of manhood, that no asceticism can turn to water, coursed through his veins fiercely as he thought of her solitary, defenceless position, and of her lithe, graceful form, and love-provoking eyes. Despise himself as he would, he could not still the voice of a desire that was almost ennobled into love by its very strength.

A bitter smile curled his lips as he thought of how he would—all going well—wield Dillon as a humble instrument in the great cause; but his hard piercing eyes softened into tears as he thought of Kathleen, and of the unworthy longing that he *could* not crush out of his heart.

Thus the storm gathered over the grey chimneys and green fields of Ballytobin, and over the dark suburb where Kathleen and the Stoic kept humble house; but the



calm before it was thorough. Tom Dillon flitted eternally between his house and Rosemore Castle, and tried to imagine himself in love with the proud grey-eyed beauty, but failed.

Kathleen plyed her needle as before, and lit up the Stoic's home with gentle light. All went on as if the dark form of danger were not on the wing; nay, a deader stillness than usual seemed to hush their lives into tranquillity, and almost into content. Oh,

“Purblind race of miserable men,”

as our great poet has sung; of what use is all the wisdom of which you boast, when the next moment is hidden from you as impenetrably as it is to the birds of the air or the beasts of the field?





CHAPTER IX.

DILLON'S SECOND, AND MORE RESPECTABLE, WEDDING.

A GRAND marriage at a fine country place is as magnificent a social ceremony as can well be imagined by the heart of fashionable man ; and to attempt to describe Tom Dillon's wedding at Rosemore Castle with Lady Alice Rose would be nothing short of presumption. Suffice it that they were married ; that the Castle was full to bursting for the occasion ; and that everything was done, as the county Conservative paper had it, "with that taste, luxury, and refinement that has ever characterized the house of Rose."

The house of Rose was indeed well represented on the occasion. There were old

and withered ones, not quite recovered from their journey; there were fresh and blooming ones, not thinking much of their cousin's beauty, or wondering at her marrying a "squireen" and a widower. There were full-blown Roses, swelling with satisfaction at the works of Lord Rosemore's *chef*. There were some of delicate hue, that wondered at the unexpected civilization of "wild Ireland;" and there were the common honest cabbage Roses of poor relations, who were thankful for what they got—thought it all delicious, and wished his Lordship could only marry a daughter every week.

Perhaps few bridegrooms ever walked to the altar in so discontented a mood as did Tom Dillon. He could never dismiss from his mind the recollection of the barefaced way in which he had been entrapped, though he still considered that he was doing a wise thing in taking a mistress to Bally-



tobin. Even as he stood before the Bishop—imported direct from London for the occasion—the memory of his last wedding came upon him, and he turned his head half expecting to see the slight figure of Kathleen beside him. But no! Cold and stern—a due sense of her dignity upon her—knelt the Lady Alice, and as he placed the fatal ring upon her long finger, he felt as if he had given his heart away, and put a block of stone in its place.

“How beautifully the bride behaved!” exclaimed the cabbage Roses (as they all returned in coaches to the Castle), as if it had been a christening, and they had expected her to howl piteously during the ceremony.

“How handsome she looks!” whispered many, as she sat, with her husband on one side of her, and her father on the other, at the head of the long table in the banqueting-hall. (It had been the billiard-room, but

when the table was removed the Earl thus re-christened it.) And indeed she ought to have looked handsome on this day above all others ; for was she not at last reaping the reward of her six years' hard work—her husband-catching campaign ? Tom, as far as looks were concerned, was well worthy of her ; and there was not a female breast in the room that did not give a little flutter of admiration, when he rose, with a blush on his manly face, and returned thanks in the usual lame way, for the health of his wife and himself. His wife ! how strangely the word sounded in his ears ! It seemed quite a different word—with an entirely distinct meaning—to that “ wife ” he had used to Kathleen. And yet it was the very same ; all that he had promised to one—ah ! and how had he kept that promise ?—he had promised to the other ; but it seemed an infidelity to his heart to do it !

It was lucky that the guests, who were

slightly astonished at the emotion with which he stammered out his words of thanks, put it down to entirely different feelings from those which actually inspired it. Married to the daughter of a Rosemore, to think of the daughter of an O'Feelan! Every Rose in the room would have shed its leaves in horror, had they dreamed of such a thing.

“ So they were wed, and merrily rang the bells.
Merrily rang the bells, and they were wed.”

And not even in heartless, if beautiful France, could a wedding with less love on either side have taken place. If, as Webster tells us, Marriage

“ — locally contains or heaven or hell,
There's no third place in it,”

then their future had not a bright aspect, but was doomed to be—

“ An age of discord and perpetual strife;”

unless the good sense that both Tom and her Ladyship prided themselves upon saved them from such an abyss of misery.



CHAPTER X.

LADY ALICE WINS A VICTORY, AND TOM

DILLON MAKES A SPEECH.

It had been arranged that the honeymoon of our newly-married couple should be dispensed with, and that they should proceed immediately after the wedding breakfast to Ballytobin. Lady Alice had indeed entertained some hopes of a tour on the Continent, but Tom had evinced so much dislike to the notion, that she had not thought it safe to insist—as yet. The tour was, however, added to the list—drawn up by herself and her sisters—of what Tom was to be *made* to do. I use the word “made” advisedly, for Lady Alice, in her inmost heart,

considered that the only way in which her husband could show his gratitude for the *mésalliance* she had contracted, was by giving in to her on every point and on every occasion. It was not long before she experienced her first disappointment. They had not been above a fortnight at Ballytobin, when Tom proposed that Emily should be asked to return, she having retired to an hotel in Dublin, while they were engaged in sipping *à deux* the honey of the loving moon. Lady Alice compressed her lips, and her high-bred nostrils dilated as if scenting battle, as she asked, in an elaborately careless tone—

“Ask your sister to return? And for how long?”

“How long, Alice? Why for good—to live here.”

“To live here!” And Lady Alice lifted her somewhat scanty eyebrows in aristocratic surprise.

“Yes,” said Tom; and a shade of annoy-

ance at his wife's manner crossed his face. "Of course. Don't you remember our settling that was to be the arrangement?"

"No—certainly; I don't remember any such thing. And really, my dear Tom, I don't see how it is feasible."

"Feasible! Most things are feasible, if one tries. My dear Alice, nothing would induce me to ask Emily to live elsewhere—nothing. And you must understand my reasons—dear." He added the last word as an afterthought, for he couldn't but feel that his manner was strangely cold and stern for a husband of but three weeks.

"No, I don't understand your reason, my dear Tom; and once for all I must tell you that such an arrangement as that Emily should live here is impossible and ridiculous. My mother—and many people besides—have told me how ruinous it is to have third people interfering between husband and wife; and really, Tom, I don't see that



because an ignorant peasant, that you were silly enough to marry, put up with——”

Tom jumped to his feet.

“Alice, once for all, leave that subject alone. Do you hear me? I am sorry to use this tone to you, already, but, by Heaven, no one, not even you, shall speak slightly of her. I want to do all you wish, Alice, in what I can ; but, as regards Emily, I have decided that she shall live here—and live here she shall. I cannot see why her presence should be disagreeable to you.”

Lady Alice flushed as he spoke, and bit her lips to keep down her angry rejoinder. All she said, however, was—

“Very well, Tom. It doesn't really matter to me, of course,” as she left the room, and her husband master of the field.

Her weapons, however, had not yet been used, and she proceeded to her “boudoir,” as the servants insisted on calling her sit-

ting-room, to launch one against the enemy ; it was the usual woman's weapon where her tongue has failed, a letter, and was in the following terms:—

“MY DEAR MISS DILLON,—You will wonder perhaps at my writing to you before dear Tom has given me the great pleasure of introducing me to you, but I cannot but feel that it is for the ultimate good of both parties that I should write now frankly and openly to you what is in my mind. Of course, my dear Miss Dillon, I have been more delighted than words can say with this beautiful old place ; nothing could make my affection for it greater than does the feeling that Tom has spent his life here ; but, were it possible, that affection would be augmented by the thought that here I shall soon have the good fortune to know you, who have been his dear and true friend for so long. I wish you could have come to

our wedding ; but I respect and understand your dislike to gaiety and noise.

“ Feeling all I do feel with regard to you and to my dear Tom, my task is doubly difficult. I am writing without Tom’s knowledge, and certainly if he knew what I am going to say he would be very angry ; but I love him so much—and you can understand that—that I brave his anger to do what I know he wishes. I scarcely know how to tell it, but I feel you will not hate *me* for it. He confided to me only yesterday, that though he loved you as sister scarcely ever was loved before, though he owed so much to you, yet seeing you reminded him so forcibly of all his miseries, and of his one great trouble, that he shrunk from the idea of your return, and felt that when he saw you again, much as he loved you, his sense of inexplicable wretchedness and melancholy would come back to him. He added, that he would sooner cut off his

right hand than that you should suspect these feelings, which he hated, but could not subdue. Can you wonder then, Miss Dillon, at my writing to you, though I long to know and feel that I should love you. Yet am I not his wife? and do I not love him more than all the world beside? I know I must give you pain—great pain if you love him as I think you do—but that very love will prevent your putting any but the right interpretation on my somewhat confused letter.

“God bless you, dear Miss Dillon, for all your kindness to Tom; it seems hard that it should be so requited, and I grieve for you as a sister. My great hope is that in time I may so conquer the brooding melancholy that is ever about him, as to be able to write to you and say ‘Come! we expect, and long for you!’

“Ever your affectionate Sister-in-Law,

“ALICE DILLON.”

As she sealed and directed this precious epistle, she smiled as her thoughts said to her, "If this does not succeed—but it will!—then mamma and my sisters must come, and it will be hard if we cannot snub her out of the house!"

The same post that carried Lady Alice's letter, took also one from Tom to his sister, in which he asked her to come and make her home, as before, at Ballytobin.

Emily answered both letters at once. To Tom she said, after a page of kind wishes—

"I think it better I should not live with you; indeed, dear Tom, I have made up my mind not to, and am now in treaty for some lodgings in C—— Street, which will suit me admirably. Though I know you think you wish me to come, I have always thought husband and wife should be all in all to each other, and my presence, though I did not interfere, could not help being a *gêne* to you both. Do not try and persuade me to

come, my dear brother—much as I am grateful to you for your invitation, I have made up my mind not to. Before long, when you have settled down, and if you will ask me to pay you a short visit, I will not say ‘No.’”

The letter to Lady Alice was but short:—

“DEAR LADY ALICE,—I quite agree with you that it is better I should no longer live at Ballytobin. To leave their homes is the fate of all women, and it would be absurd of me to complain. I do not; but trust you will be happy. I am sure Tom will try to make you so, and you cannot love him more than his honest, generous heart deserves.

“Your affectionate Sister-in-Law,

“EMILY DILLON.”

Lady Alice smiled triumphantly as she put this letter into her pocket and went



down to dinner. When Tom told her that Emily refused to live with them, she affected surprise and sorrow enough to please him with the idea that his previous arguments had convinced her. To achieve the impossible is a great idea, and so men are always delighted with the notion that they have convinced a woman by argument. It is like catching a bird by placing salt on his tail.

* * * *

Soon after this diplomatic victory of Lady Alice's, Tom gave a grand dinner to his tenants, who were desirous in some way of celebrating the occasion of his marriage. Tom sat at the top of the long table, laid out in an immense tent, with his agent on one hand, and Father Murphy on the other. Lady Alice came in for a moment ere they set to work on the good cheer provided them; and they gave her a cheer which was good of its kind too.



When they had feasted sufficiently, Tom's health was drunk, and he rose amid a great clattering of glasses and thumping on the table, and made a short speech, which perhaps I may be pardoned for reproducing. Those readers who think that there should be nothing in a novel but what is simply amusing or exciting, are warned off.

"My friends," he said, and deafening cheers silenced him for several minutes. "My friends, I am not very fond of speech-making after dinner, and I like it still less when myself must be the speaker; but there are a few words I should like to say to you, and if you find them dull you must try and forgive me. You have just drunk, in a manner most flattering to my wife and to me, our healths, and, if I was to judge my popularity by your cheers, I should be the proudest man in Ireland. But I cannot so judge the friendship you now display, for Heaven knows what cause of discontent



might arise among you ; and then we should see our laureate's words verified—

‘ So vanish friendships only made in wine.’

“ I want your feeling towards me to rest on a surer basis than the excitement of this moment, and I want to explain two or three things that have, I think, made you angry with me of late” (a voice—“ Not with you, with Misther Arthur”). “ Well, with Mr. Arthur, and that's the same thing—for whatever he does he does by my order. If you have anger to show, show it to me, not to him, for I am alone answerable. Now, my friends, I'll begin at the beginning. Some years ago a friend of mine bought property here, and honestly tried to improve both it and the position of the tenants upon it. What was the result? By Heaven! my blood boils even now to think of it. He was murdered, and not a voice among all his tenants was raised to denounce the guilty man ; nay

more, they shielded him and helped him to escape. This man, murdered for trying to do good, was my friend ; and I used every effort in my power to bring the assassin to justice. I hear that that made you angry. Was it so ?”

A grey-haired man some way down the table, rose and said—

“It was only blood for blood. He had killed the Widow O’Feelan. Blood for blood !” There was a suppressed murmur round the tent.

“No,” cried Tom, angrily, “it was not blood for blood. It was simple murder—and stupid murder. He was killed for trying to do good. The woman whose death you try to lay at his door, was taken from a tumbledown cabin and put into a good slated cottage. She died,—it was not his fault. However, we will not discuss that now—the reason I mentioned it at all was because Mr. Arthur tells me that there was



much feeling amongst you against me for my efforts to discover the murderer. Tell me, you, James O'Niel, would you not try to discover and to punish the man who should slay your friend? Tell me, any one of you, if I and the other landlords of the county determined that one of your friends, a peasant like you are, was dangerous to our peace and must be destroyed, and we destroyed him, should you bear it calmly and move no hand towards revenge? I tell you, friends—if you will be friends—that I would give half my fortune now to see the murderer of Mr. Verner brought to the scaffold.” There was a murmur of disapproval as he said this; but Father Murphy held up his hand and it ceased. “And now,” Tom went on, “let us leave that gloomy subject. The second thing that I hear has made some of you angry is that I am gradually consolidating my farms; that is, that when a lease of a farm under fifteen



acres falls in, I do not renew it, but join it to another. But before you are angry with me for doing this, just consider for a moment what my object is. Can one of you get up and tell me truthfully that a farm of ten or twelve acres keeps a man and his family comfortably, and that he is enabled by what he makes to engage labourers at harvest time, buy manure, or in fact do any sort of justice to the land? No, there is not a man who could assert so preposterous a thing; and yet you are angry with me because I try to give the good farmers more land, and to make the bad ones—paupers as long as they *are* farmers—well-to-do labourers, at wages almost unknown in England. Where is the hardship of it? We are not all born kings—I might wish to be a duke instead of a humble squire, but I should be a fool if I let my longing stand in the way of my prosperity. We cannot all be rich farmers



—some must be labourers—Why not? Where is that pride that you talk so much about here, when, having found that your five or ten acres and your pig will not keep the wolf from the door, you join a gang of labourers to England, and work there for English farmers? What is the difference between English and Irish work. The higher wages are here. You will tell me no doubt of old ties, of the land that has been handed down from father to son; nay, perhaps you will tell me of *your right to the soil you till*. But supposing a law were passed that allotted the land to each man that he could prove his direct ancestor held in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, which one of you could come forward and claim successfully an acre of land in Ireland? Such phrases as that you have a right to the soil, Ireland for the Irish, and the like, do a great deal of harm, and all the more, because you do not understand the real meaning of

them. Supposing Paddy O'Rourke there—who I see made a speech the other day at a Tenant-right meeting—supposing he had all the land he says the O'Rourkes held in days gone by, and dispossessed myself and five or six other unfortunate landlords, would he till it all himself, or would he become a landlord? What would all the present tenants on his new estate be but tenants still? and if they were tenants would they not be discontented still, and cry out for the expulsion of Mr. O'Rourke, and the land for the tillers of the soil. Then where would you be, Paddy O'Rourke? (a general laugh at Paddy's expense followed this, and Tom brightened up as he saw that his audience's good temper was restored). But perhaps what you want is the equal division of land amongst every one. I don't know how many acres there are in Ireland, but I know pretty well how many people there are, and I fancy the division would come to



much the same thing as the division of money. Listen! a certain starving and importunate Republican was perpetually begging from one of our richest merchant princes, mentioning always as he begged that if every one had his share he should be content. One day the merchant received him courteously as usual, and listened to his prayer, followed by the remark that money ought to be divided equally among all men. 'You have told me this so often, my friend,' said the merchant, 'that I am convinced there is much truth in what you say. I have, as nearly as possible, computed what the wealth of the world divided amongst every one would come to, and that you can have no possible cause of complaint, and also to rid myself of you for good, I will now hand over to you the whole capital you would receive from the division. Allow me to present you with eighteen shillings and sixpence. Imagine the money of the

world divided—that is your share!’ And that,” added Tom, amidst the laughter that followed his story, “would be about the result if property were divided among us all. We should *all* starve—that is, if the equality was to be kept up. In the other case classes would soon form again, and those who are poor now would be poorer still, for no one would feel bound to help them. Depend upon it our chances, in our several ranks, are at some time of our lives pretty nearly equal. Look at Farmer Callaghan there. Some of you can remember him a day labourer; but he *worked*, and did not talk of his right to the soil—he made his right to it. Think of that, Paddy O’Rourke! Do your Tenant-right meetings pay as well as the acres, he has earned? And now, friends, before I have done, I will just touch upon one other topic that I believe is often in your minds—that is, religion. I don’t mean political religion, for I hate it: and



the Church of God is never so defamed as when she is made to serve the place-grasping interests of party : but I mean real *bond fide* religion. You feel sore, and I am told thousands through this part of Ireland feel sore, at having a Protestant, a heretic, over them. I wont try and argue with you and show that I am not a heretic, though I am a Protestant—indeed, my friend Father Murphy perhaps wouldn't let me—but I will ask you honestly to tell me what harm our differing in religion does you. You know as well as I do, though it doesn't suit your newspapers and orators to say so, that your churches are the finest, and your cathedrals the grandest throughout Ireland. You know that if there is ever any difficulty in the way of money matters among you—such as the restoring of a chapel—or the building of a priest's house—the Protestant landlord is the first to come forward with assistance. Is any attempt to make

proselytes seen among you? Is our creed taught at all in the National Schools? Are not the majority of the schoolmasters of your own persuasion? Do we ever—and though Paddy O'Rourke is looking at me, I ask the question fearlessly—do we ever make any difference, in our dealings with our tenantry, between Catholics and Protestants? and lastly, as regards this especial property, is not your parish priest my friend, and is not my agent one of your faith? As long as I do my duty honestly by you, what would it matter to you if I worshipped Mumbo Jumbo, Mahomet, or the moon. Do I ask a man's religion when he wishes to become my tenant? why, when he is my tenant, should he quarrel with the belief of his landlord? I say that this cant about 'an alien creed' is childish and nonsensical, and is unworthy of a civilized and sensible nation such as, thank God, Ireland still is, despite the efforts of agitators to turn her

into a hotbed of sedition, anarchy, and misery. Yes, Mr. O'Rourke, you may well hang your head—but I forgive you ; let all bygones be bygones—let us try and live together in friendship—true friendship I mean, no stock phrase—do our duty by each other, tell the truth to one another and shame the devil, whether he comes as a Fenian Head Centre, or as a Tenant-right agitator. True Tenant-right is the right to be happy, and I want to make you so. True freedom is to know no care, never to borrow money, and to fear no man : that is what I want to see you do. I hope I have not given offence in what I have said, but I have spoken from my heart, and I firmly believe I have spoken the truth. I love my tenants, and I would see them happy : they must pay their rents, or I should starve, and so would my family ; but as long as I occupy the position of their landlord, I will do my duty towards them, and I shall never

swerve, be they pleased or not, even if my efforts to do them good are to end as did my poor friend's not long ago."

Tom had been on very dangerous ground all through his speech: only the great affection he was held in by the majority of his tenants prevented the murmur that greeted many of his observations from swelling into a roar; but his last words touched a chord of affection in their hearts, and when he hinted at his own assassination every man in the tent jumped to his feet, and a wild cheer went forth from two hundred lusty lungs. It was some time before silence was again procured, and even then those who had not yet done so were seen to steal round the table and whisper an ironical remark into the ear of the unfortunate Paddy O'Rourke, who almost had the appearance of being ashamed of himself. The last shot of sarcasm having been fired at him, Tom again rose and proposed his

agent, Mr. Arthur's health. All were in a good humour, the generous strength of the whisky having, perhaps, something to do with it, and his name was received with unanimous applause, although there were many there who had been vowing vengeance against him an hour before. An Irishman's heart is very weak, and when softened with a little whisky, it is to be gained with wonderful ease.

Mr. Arthur made the usual agent's speech on these occasions : saying that he did his best, and how proud he was to be agent to such tenants under such a landlord. No one listened to him, but all cheered him, and he sat down, fully convinced that he was a natural orator, and if there ever *should* be a Parliament in Dublin——. It is a peculiarity of Irish spouters, and their name is legion, that they *all* think that if the Union were repealed and a Parliament held in Dublin, they would each one be in it, if **not**

the leader of the government or opposition : though one cannot imagine an Irish Parliament as anything but *all* opposition. Soon after, Father Murphy's health was drunk, and he made a short and temperate speech, in which he advocated friendliness between all creeds and classes, but reminded his hearers that they must be careful that no drop of what he was bound to call the poison of heresy mixed with their children's milk.

Then came the toast of "the tenants" proposed by Tom, coupled with the name of the oldest, Farmer Callaghan, who replied as well as a want of teeth would allow him, and was cheered to the echo, though not a word he said was distinguishable. Then, just as Tom was about to leave them to a freer enjoyment of their whisky, meaning to return when the dancing had begun, Paddy O'Rourke rose, and announced that he wished to propose the toast of "Old

Ireland," saying, amid much laughter, that the axe of Patriotism would soon be put to the roots of the tree of despotism, while millions of Irishmen gazed at its blood-sodden face with jeers of heavenly triumph. Then his oration was cut short by the cheers that followed Tom down the tent as he walked out, saying a word here and there to those he passed. As he got outside, he heard a voice move with comic gravity that "Paddy O'Rourke be given some more whisky, and shut up," followed by a shout of applause, and then one more cheer for "the Squire" given with hearty emphasis. Pondering over the extraordinary character of the true Irishman,—perpetually giving up the substance for the shadow, always dropping the cheese when the fox persuades, Tom walked alone through the gathering darkness towards the house. He was within twenty yards of the hall door when he heard a step behind him, and turned, ex-

pecting to see that Father Murphy was following him.

“Is that you, Murphy?” he said.

“No, yer honour—it’s not his riv’rence. Be aisy a moment, an’ I’ll tell ye.”

“Larry O’Feelan!” cried Tom, grasping him by the collar. “Larry O’Feelan,” he muttered between his teeth, “at last!”

“I wouldn’t hould on so tight, Squire, if I were you,” said Larry, wriggling to free himself. “An’ I’d be civil to a gentleman who’s come from America to tell you a sacret. Maybe if you don’t let me go, an’ if anyone comes up—” and he almost choked as Tom’s grasp of his collar tightened—“I might tell thim somethin’ about Kathleen, an’, an’—be Jasus ye’re chokin’ me,—and bigamy.”

He howled the last word out in agony, for Tom had gradually twisted his hand round in his collar, and the poor man was almost choking.



"Bigamy!" said Tom, letting him go, and stepping back a pace. "Bigamy!"

"Wouldn't it be bettther if we talked where there's no one to hear," suggested Larry, grinning as he saw the effect of his words.

"Yes—yes—but tell me—for the love of Heaven tell me, man, she lives—Kathleen lives?"

"She does."

Tom burst into tears—tears of pure joy they were, reader.

"Thank God for that!" he said.

Larry was puzzled. "But maybe Lady Alice,——" he began.

"Silence!" exclaimed Tom. "Come to my room and tell me all you know. I suppose you want to be paid for it."

"Well, yer honour, it isn't for the money I'd do it, but still——"

"Follow me," said Tom, impatiently, and led the way through a side door to his study.

A few minutes after, Father Murphy came out of the tent, and asked a man who was standing outside whether Mr. Dillon had gone into the house.

"Yes, yer riv'rence," said the man, mysteriously. "He was met by a man, and went in with him."

The priest looked at the speaker. "The man was Larry O'Feelan?" he said.

"Yes, surr—but I haven't tould yer riv'rence, mind."

Never did priest cover the ground quicker than did Father Murphy the space between the tent and the house. Dashing out of breath into the hall, he met Pat Doolan, who, though no longer butler (as an Englishman had been engaged by Lady Rosemore's express wish), was still Tom's valet. "Let no one come to Mr. Dillon's study, Pat. He has business," he said, and passed on down the tobacco-smelling passage.





CHAPTER XI.

THE PRIEST PLAYS HIS FISH.

WHEN the priest reached the study, he found Tom seated in a chair, his face buried in his hands, and Larry standing before him with a smile upon his features.

"My poor friend!" he said, leaning over Tom, and putting his hand upon his shoulder! "You have heard this man's news! It is terrible."

"Terrible," echoed Tom, looking up, with a wild look in his eyes, "to hear that my darling lives? Terrible! Ah, no! But," he continued, his tone changing to fierceness, as he rose from his chair and turned to the priest, "you knew of this, and you

let me marry—you knew it, scoundrel——” he advanced a step menacingly towards Father Murphy, who exclaimed, as he retreated to the door—

“No, Dillon; on my honour I did not. I have known it but a week, and it was too late then, I tried to keep it from you.”

“You tried to keep it from me! You tried to keep the knowledge of my darling’s being alive from me! By Heaven! Father Murphy, you will provoke me beyond endurance. By what right did you think to separate husband and wife? By what right, I say?—answer!”

“Mr. Dillon, your grief makes you unjust—I——”

“Grief! No, joy, joy! My darling lives! my darling lives!” and he sank down into his chair, and again covered his face with his hands.

Murphy whispered a few words in an

undertone to Larry, who nodded a surly affirmative.

“Ah, Mr. Dillon,” said the priest, after a pause, during which Tom never moved, and seemed to have forgotten that there were others in the room, “you do not know all yet; and I wish I could spare you, but——”

“All? what more to know! She lives! she lives! I know what you would say—I am married to another. I am a miserable man, but now I can think of nothing but that my darling lives. Leave me, Murphy, and forgive the hard words I said. I am half mad, but of course you did not know she was alive when I married; but leave me now, and take that man with you. I must be alone to think. Go; I will ring when I can hear more.”

“Oh, Mr. Dillon,” said the priest, making a sign to Larry not to move, “believe me I sympathize with you more than words can

say ; but it is necessary, as you know so much, that you know all. Kathleen is alive, it is true, but she is dead to you, and to your love."

"No, no! she never can be! I am confused now, and know not what to do. But she is my true wife—my legal wife she is, priest ; you cannot deny it!"

"I mean," went on Father Murphy, in soft tones, "that she has voluntarily given up the love she was always unworthy of."

"Unworthy! No ; it is I who am unworthy!"

"Mr. Dillon, you force me to speak out. When I heard the news that you have just been told, I heard more, that Larry O'Feelan has not dared to tell you. She is not worthy of another thought on your part. She is not——"

"What do you mean?" cried Tom, looking up with the glare of a tiger in his eyes. "Do you dare to slander her? By God——"

"I dare the truth. The sad fact is, that Kathleen—your wife, *that was*—is living under the protection of a man—a gentleman, in Dublin."

The priest had his hand on the door as he said this, but to his astonishment, Tom never moved, and no sound came from him.

"God knows how I pity you," said the priest, after a pause, advancing towards him.

"Keep your pity," said Tom, looking up, his face pale as death, and his mouth set. "I want no pity; but is this true? Can it be proved? You—O'Feelan—why did you not tell me?"

"It is thrue," answered Larry, solemnly, after a look at the priest, "an' I didn't loike to tell ye. He's a man called——"

"Go!" interrupted Tom, suddenly. "I can bear no more now; go—and you, Murphy. I shall require more evidence than this man's word before I believe Kathleen—my

pure, loving Kathleen, is false even to me ! even to me !”

As he almost wailed the last words, his head sank forward again upon his hands, and he remained motionless.

The priest, with a look of triumph, left the room, followed by Larry, who, as soon as the door was closed, whispered—“ What’s it all for ?”

“ For ?” returned the priest, calmly, “ for the good of the Church, and for your good, my friend ; for unless you are prepared to swear to the youth and gentility of the elderly gentleman you describe as being with your sister, you will find it slightly hot for you here.”

“ Why wouldn’t I make the gentleman younger if yer riv’rence wishes it ? He’d loike it himself, if he knew,” answered Larry, airily.

It may well be supposed that Father Murphy, aided by Larry O’Feelan, to whom

he made promises and threats alternately, did not find it very difficult to convince Tom of the infidelity of his new-found wife. Her absence for this long time, despite the advertisements, was in itself a strong proof.

Larry was craftily made to dilate, as it were by accident, on the magnificence of her apparel and residence, and on the good looks and gracious manners of the "young gentleman" with whom he had seen her; and in a hundred artful ways Tom was gradually led to believe in the guilt of her he loved. He had talked, at one moment, of going to Dublin to convince himself by his own eyesight; but a letter the priest contrived to receive from a friend in Dublin seemed to put the matter beyond all doubt, and he gave up his journey.

When his mind, too, had somewhat recovered from the successive shocks of learning of her existence, and then of her pretended infidelity, he began to see that prac-



tically his position would have been a very terrible one. As it was, though his heart might bleed at the thought of the loss of Kathleen's love, yet he was spared the infliction of an irreparable insult on the lady who had consented to share his name. He had no great affection for Lady Alice, but to have told her that she was not his wife would have been almost impossible, and Tom shuddered as he thought of the scandal in the county, and the rage of the Rosemores.

The priest told him so often that, after all, everything had happened for the best, that he at last believed him; and though his melancholy increased, and angered Lady Alice, whose wish for gaiety had now shown itself strongly, more and more, everything went on smoothly enough at Ballytobin. Her Ladyship drove about in a smart pony carriage, and paid visits of ceremony to the neighbours; she planned extensive flower

gardens, and frightened the old family gardener out of his wits with her magnificent notions; she sat about in picturesque dresses and sketched; she read novels on a sofa in her boudoir; and altogether she managed to get through her time pretty well, though she looked forward eagerly to the approaching visit of her family, who, it had been arranged, to Tom's annoyance, were to bring their own party with them.

Meantime the secret that existed between the priest and the master of the house increased sevenfold the influence of the former, who had now taken upon himself almost the entire management of the estate. Mr. Arthur, being a Roman Catholic, not daring to prevent him, Tom's plans for consolidating his farms were speedily blown to the winds, and the neighbours, as they talked over the state of the county, shook their wise heads ominously when they touched upon the ruinous subdivision of land that



was taking place upon the Ballytobin estate.

Tom took no interest in anything, and did not seem to care whether he were ruined or no. Lady Alice had only to ask for a thing to have it, and so she graciously condoned Tom's moroseness and silence for his generosity. Larry O'Feelan, being not to be trusted, was safely shipped off to America with a large sum of money in his pocket, and, though Tom felt that he was living over a volcano, as yet the secret seemed safe as secret could be.

Emily wrote to him every now and then, and her letters were the only things that seemed at all to rouse him from his stupor; but she had not much to tell him, and though always kind and cheerful, they became fewer and further between.

Mr. Fenelly brought his wife to call upon Lady Alice; but as he trod on her ladyship's gown twice during his visit, tearing

it on each occasion, and as his wife thought it a good opportunity for bringing her democratic and snubbing qualities into play, Tom's wife vowed to herself on their departure that this should be their last visit.

The leaves were falling fast when the Rosemores at length arrived, bringing with them that indescribable air of discomfort and bustle that always characterizes London people in the country.

"Dear Tom" did not respond very heartily to the affectionate advances of his mother-in-law, and was barely civil to his wife's sisters. The guests he left entirely to be amused as best they might, and at length he was given up as a bad job, and no longer pressed to join their drives, rides, and walks. Indeed his silent, sombre appearance was somewhat of a wet blanket upon the fire of their mirth, and they were not very sorry that he should shut himself up all day in his study.



It was about this time that the priest began gradually to place his faith before Tom in an alluring light, and at last openly to try and persuade him to change his religion. But he made little progress in his work of conversion ; for Tom would not even argue the matter over, never tried to defend Protestantism, and never abused Popery—a frame of mind most annoying and perplexing to the proselytizer.

The fact of his crime in living quietly on in the knowledge that he had two wives, at first gave him much uneasiness ; but it was so evidently impossible for him to do anything in the matter without exposing the whole story, that he was at last content to allow matters to remain as they were. So man proposed ; but the disposing of Heaven was at hand : iron-handed, leaden-footed Nemesis was at the gate !



CHAPTER XII.

“HAST THOU FOUND ME, OH MINE ENEMY !”

Is there not something mournfully typical in the advance of winter? Does it not seem to say to each of us, “See how the short summer of pleasure fades and is forgotten before the dark majesty of my coming?” and as the days shorten, and the remembrance of the summer’s warmth appears a dream of the past, do not many of us wonder if we shall ever again see and hear the

“Song of birds, and stir of leaves and wings,
And run of rills, and babble of bright springs,
And hourly burst of pretty buds to flowers.

* * * * *

And hum of many sounds making one voice
That sweetens the smooth air with a melodious noise.”

But no! the majority of those who will read this do nothing of the sort; they scan the meet of the hounds, and think of nothing but the "lusty cry" that awakens the "drowsy echo," and the perfect "language in a mingled voice" that heralds the who-hoop of infinite delight!

This age lives in the present; we care not even for the day after to-morrow. Out upon him that dares to reflect; let him drown his untimely philosophy in Veuve Cliquot, and—

"Home returning, let him soothly say
Fate cannot harm me, I have dined to-day!"

For *us* winter brings no thoughts but of rocketing pheasants and straight-going foxes; for *us* next year is as far off as the millennium. We are all young; grey heads are no signs of age with us. Our blood courses swiftly through our veins, and our voices will never grow feeble while we sing the praises of the present, the enjoyment of

the hour! Oh, happy age, that can drown its doom in dance! Oh, happy time, that reckes so little of eternity!

“Selfless youth,” Mr. Coleridge? No! It is only after much experience that we begin to think at all of other people.

I am like a railway train, once off the line there is no knowing where I may get to. With an humble apology to the readers who do not read to criticise, I proceed.

As the wind grew colder and the nights longer, Kathleen felt that her days on earth were shortening, and gladly did she prepare to exchange the coldness of the world that had not been a happy one to her, for the warmth of happiness her religious feeling told her was to come. Thinner and thinner she grew, a shadow of herself as it were, and more and more melancholy became the poor old man with the quaint and but half-comprehended creed, and the dark ringlets. To lose her, who had been the happiness, the



light of his lodging for more than a year, seemed to him the acme of misery ; and but a short time ago he would not have hesitated to follow her, or at least to go as far in her direction as out of the world we wot of. But her artless reasonings had changed him, and though he scarcely as yet knew what he believed and did not believe, what he trusted to, what he hoped for, he did know that to kneel by her side while the incense and the priest's voice came dimly from the altar, was a religion in itself to him. Old man as he was, he now for the first time knew all the eloquence of violet eyes ; and he swore now, that come what might, he would try to act up to the advice that came so strangely from her childish lips, would try to be what she called “good,” if only for her sake.

Kathleen was not yet ill enough to take to her bed. Her walks had become rarer and shorter now, but she still often struggled

out to breathe a little air. Much as the Stoic wished it, she would not allow him to neglect his business for her ; and he hurried home each evening in agony at the idea that a change might suddenly take place, and he might find her starting on that lonesome journey that we all take once.

It was in the depth of winter, some months after Emily's departure from Ballytobin, and settlement in Dublin, that she and Kathleen met suddenly in the street. The latter had crawled out in the afternoon, allured by a ray of sun that was struggling through the dark clouds, and was walking slowly and laboriously along, supporting herself with a stick—her name carved on it by the Stoic—and stopping every now and then to take breath or to cough painfully.

“Kathleen !” exclaimed Emily ; and the two women stood facing one another. The one pale as death, with eyes widening in



their terror; and the other erect, stern, and pitiless-looking, and in all the pride of robust health and comeliness; for Emily was very handsome.

"Miss Dillon!" gasped out Kathleen, and turned as if to flee.

"Alive! What is this, Kathleen? What game have you been playing with my brother? What dreadful plot——"

"Plot!" exclaimed Kathleen, shaking so that the feruled end of her stick rattled on the pavement. "There is no plot. I only——"

"You only left him. Left him—your husband. Girl! do you know what the consequences have been?" And she grasped the little wrist almost savagely.

Her touch seemed to revive the other, who lifted her head.

"I saw I could not make him happy, and I left him. He loved you more than me, and I——"



"Peace to such folly," exclaimed Emily, impatiently, "it sickens me. He loved you with all his heart. You broke it when you left him; and this story of your death, trumped up by you, I suppose?"

"It will be true soon," said Kathleen, calmly. And for the first time Emily remarked her death-like look.

"You are ill?" she said, with almost a kind tone in her voice.

"I am. I am glad of it—I want to die. I should have died quietly, and he would have known nothing. But you—you have always hated me. You have ruined my life. You have been the obstacle to his love, the only thing I prized on earth. And now you would make even my death miserable. As I said to you at Ballytobin, I say now—Go! I recognise in you no right to detain or question me. Go!" And she raised her hand with a gesture full of dignity.



"Kathleen!" exclaimed Emily, half angry and half wondering. But a fit of coughing came over the other, and then it came upon Emily for the first time that she had found her but just in time, before she was indeed lost to those on earth for ever.

"My poor child," she said, kindly, supporting the shaking form, "I did not know you were so ill. But you should not be out, and it is getting so cold. Here, you *must* let me help you. I won't walk faster than suits you, but home you must go. Tell me the way. Down this street to the right? Can you walk better now?"

"I am so cold," said Kathleen, shivering, and suffering Emily—whom she had defied but a minute before—to lead her on. "So cold——"

"My poor little girl, but you must get home. You ought to be in bed."

"Oh, no." And Kathleen's eyes glistened as she spoke. "Not till——"



"Till when?"

But she did not answer. And they proceeded silently along, Emily almost carrying her as she became momentarily weaker. Emily's fear was lest she should become insensible and unable to direct the way by motions of her head.

At length they reached what was now Kathleen's home, and both hesitated at the door.

Kathleen spoke after a moment's pause, supporting herself by one hand on the iron railing that guarded the stone steps.

"Thank you for helping me, Miss Dillon. I should have fallen in the street else. You see how near the end is! You will let it come quietly? You will not betray me? Oh, Miss Dillon, it is not much I ask—to die quietly. Let him never know I deceived him, for I love him so. Oh, promise! promise!" and with her disengaged hand she took a feeble hold of Emily's arm.



Emily hesitated.

"He does not want to know I live. He has forgotten me. How could he recollect me so long? To know that I had deceived him would pain him. And I love him so. Oh, Miss Dillon, if you have any kindness in your heart, promise to spare me!"

Emily thought of the terror her news would carry into the peaceful *ménage* of Ballytobin; and she looked at the pale face before her. "She is right," she thought, "it cannot be for long."

"Yes, I will promise," she said aloud, "my poor child! But you are too weak to go upstairs alone," she exclaimed, as Kathleen opened the door and staggered in. "You *must* let me help you; I will not intrude."

"No, no," said Kathleen, waving her back. "Come no further. I am at home. Remember, you have promised." And, aided by the banisters and her stick, she

ascended slowly out of the view of Emily, who stood still sadly beneath.

The street-door opening made her turn her head, and a tall man tried courteously to pass her in the narrow passage.

"Sir," she said.

"I am in a hurry, madam ; I am sorry," he answered, taking the three first stairs at a stride of his long legs.

"But, sir, one moment. I wish to ask you a question. There is a young lady here—very ill."

"There is, madam," he said, turning round, but not descending the three stairs he had mounted. "Very ill ; I must see her at once."

"Oh, you are the doctor?"

"No ; but I am her friend."

"She has a doctor?"

"She has, madam. But—you know her?" as it struck him for the first time in his hurry that these questions from a stranger were curious.



"I am Miss Dillon."

"Miss Dillon! You have seen her?"

And he came down the stairs.

"Yes, sir; but she would not let me go up with her. I cannot go till I know all. Who is she living with? What money has she? Can I do anything?"

"But," said the Stoic, puzzled, "her secret then is discovered?"

"I have promised not to reveal it. *Now* you can tell me all." And Emily fairly stamped on the ground in her impatience.

"I must see her now," said he. "But as you have promised to keep her secret, I will tell you all there is to tell. I cannot leave her to-night, though. She may be worse."

"She will not last a month," said Emily, sadly.

"Oh, God!" cried he, "then she must be worse. Where do you live, madam? I will

come to you when she is asleep, and has seen the doctor."

Emily gave him her address, and departed; Kathleen's gesture of horror, when she had tried to accompany her upstairs, forbade her to try and see her, much as she wished it.

That night, when all the world were sleeping, the Stoic, in Emily's room, told her the story of his finding the half-starved girl on the bridge, and of their almost happy life together since. He told her of how often Kathleen spoke of her love for her husband, and how she prayed for his happiness. He told her, for she implored him to tell all, of her belief that Emily Dillon herself was the cause of the wreck of her life.

"I see I acted wrongly, Mr. Griffiths," said she, more humbly than was her wont. "I see it now, but I acted then for the best. Poor girl! poor girl! How little she knew me!"

At first the Stoic was disinclined to believe

aught of her sorrow for the girl whom, he thought, she had so deeply wronged ; but at last, after a week had passed, and no time or money were spared by her to make the poor invalid comfortable (for Kathleen was now in bed, and human power was not likely ever to enable her to rise again), his cold, stern manner to her abated ; and he even went so far one night as to allow her into Kathleen's room to see her sleeping.

There was a tear in the hard woman's eye as she gazed on the fragile form before her, and she thought of what she had been when first Tom brought her home in beauty to Ballytobin.

Meanwhile, Kathleen grew no worse, though no better, and talked incessantly of soon moving about again. The Stoic bit his lips and turned away, and the kind-hearted doctor shook his head sadly when she expressed this hope ; but she reiterated it again and again.

“ I will ! I must ! ” she cried ; “ only once —only for one day. Say I may, Stoic ! ”

But he could not say so, he could only hide his face, and keep from her the tears he could not restrain, philosopher as he thought he was.

At last, three weeks after Emily’s discovery, the Stoic had persuaded Kathleen to let her come and ask for forgiveness. Kathleen feared her, could scarcely keep from hating her still, but at last she acquiesced, and the hour about midday was fixed for the visit. Griffiths went in a car to fetch Emily, and the nurse who had been engaged was sent out on some errand by Kathleen directly he had gone.

When Emily and the Stoic entered the sick room, they found it tenantless. Kathleen was gone, and they could find no trace of her !



CHAPTER XIII.

THE PRIEST "STRIKES" HIS FISH.

"DILLON," said the priest, knocking off the ashes of one of Tom's best cigars, as he lay luxuriously back in one of Tom's most comfortable arm-chairs, "do you ever seriously consider that great question I so often try to impress upon you—that question of saving your soul alive?"

"It is a question I have considered, I hope, more or less, from my youth up. It has always appeared to me a cowardly thing to do right from the fear of hell. I have always tried, but failed often enough, to do it for the hope of Heaven."

"Sophistry, that : the hope of Heaven is

the fear of Hell. You have, in your religion, but the choice between the two, and hoping to go to one place must be hoping not to go to the other. You can't draw a distinction?"

"Perhaps not, but I can *feel* one. This is about my creed; I forget where I saw the lines, but I never can forget them. The creed of those by whom—

"A thought, a sigh, a tear
In lonely meditation shed,
Are held for holier acts of prayer
Than bended knee or bowed head.

"Their only good—good done to man,
To harm mankind their only ill;
All other good and ill they hold
The wild caprice of human will.

"Life is to them the arch that spans
The dark abyss—eternity.
They build not on its narrow way,
But tread it, Allah, seeking thee!"

"Very pretty," said the priest, with a half-sneer; "but have you ever considered how religion—I mean true religion—will

help you to tread this narrow way without falling."

"The religion of doing right——"

"Is no religion at all, or why should we send missionaries to the savages?"

"Do you not think that their religion, or whatever it may be called, would keep them as straight as that we try to teach them?"

"Yes, straight in one sense, but they can never reach eternity by its means. However, this vexed question, in which Protestants agree with us—witness your Thirty-nine Articles—is not what I wanted to talk about. You have a religion, at least you go to church once a week, and come home abusing the service and the sermon. You are not contented with your religion, few of you are, and yet you refuse——"

"We refuse to change it, yes. I, no doubt, should have been a fervent Roman Catholic—yes, *Roman*, for we are all Catholics—had my parents been so. As it is, I

am content to worship in my father's faith. Enough of the subject, Murphy; you cannot convince me, as you know well, and I have no ambition to try to convince you."

"But what if I had other modes of conviction than argument."

"What, brute force!" said Tom, laughing. "You wouldn't try and thrash me into conversion; though I know that an Irishman's best argument is his shillelagh."

"You will find I am serious, Dillon. You know I wish you to become a Catholic."

"You have told me so often enough."

"I am determined you shall become one."

The priest said this in a tone that killed the smile rising on Tom's lips.

"Determined!"

"Yes, determined. Has it not ever struck you that I possess a secret of yours, a whisper of which would set all this quiet establishment in a flame, and place you, perhaps,

at the felon's dock. Bigamy is an ugly word, Mr. Dillon."

Tom jumped to his feet with an oath. The priest still sat in his chair, cigar in hand, and with an ugly smile on his face.

"Oh, yes, you may swear! but I hold you in my power—in my hand, as it were," and he opened and shut his hand as if he were crushing him in it. "No doubt you think me a blackguard for threatening, but I do it in the interests of my Church. I care not about what you may *feel*, I want you only to become openly a Catholic, or else——"

He left his sentence unfinished, and looked up at Tom, who stood before him, white with passion and shaking all over.

"Scoundrel! do you dare threaten me—threaten me too with the consequences of your own advice!"

"My advice matters but little. The simple fact remains—you have two wives,

and I can prove that you have known it for some time. Stop, no violence, Mr. Dillon!" for Tom had advanced threateningly towards him; "that can do no good. Let us indulge in no heroics. We are not children. Look here, and try to be calm. I want you to do a simple, easy thing, and I am determined you shall do it. I hold a secret in my power that would ruin your whole life, and make a harlot of the woman you now call your wife. Unless you do the little thing I want, I make that secret public. There is no need to tell you the consequences: you can imagine them. You can imagine the feeling of our proud Lord Rosemore and her Ladyship, when they know that their daughter is but your mistress. You can imagine——"

"Stop, priest! or, by Heaven, I'll strangle you where you sit! Let me think—yes, you hold this secret; but you know that when I married I thought Kathleen was dead.



By God! I see it all now! You knew she lived when you reported her death! Scoundrel! I——"

"Perhaps I did know," said the priest, still calmly, his cigar not having gone out. "What then? Have you not lived still with Lady Alice as your wife after you knew she was no such thing? Can I not prove Larry's coming and the news he bore? No, Dillon, it is no use to rave, or to call me names, or to threaten me. You are in my power, and what do I want? Only that you should change a religion I have heard you a hundred times say was defective, for one in which there are no flaws—a religion which——"

"Stay," said Tom, whose first passion was over, but who still stood in the middle of the room. "That will do about the religion. When is it your intention to denounce me if I refuse?"

"To-night. Lord and Lady Rosemore's



arrival this morning was all I waited for."

"And if I say you lie?"

"I will bring Kathleen to prove my words."

"Kathleen!" murmured Tom, to himself, "to see her again!"

The priest heard the words.

"I wish to tell you nothing but the truth, Dillon. I may have known she was alive when you married, but I also knew that her conduct had made her dead to you, or I would have brought her back to you, for she would have been an instrument for your conversion."

"She would not have served you so," said Tom, angrily.

"Well—no matter. She forfeited all right to a place in your house, and had it suited me, you might have got a divorce from her, and Lady Alice might have been now your wife in reality. As it is——"

"You will denounce me to-night?" said Tom, abruptly.

"I hope not. I hope you will give me your promise to come to the true Church."

"Go," said Tom, and he pointed to the door.

"You will see me again this afternoon. You had better think it over: this evening will bring you to ruin else."

"Go!"

"Shall I not see you then again to-day?"

"Go!"

The priest flushed. "I will go; but your so-called wife will go too!"

"Go now," said Tom, calmly, unheeding his words, "and never enter my house again. By God! I will horsewhip you from it if you dare to. Meet me at seven this evening in the shrubbery. I will give you my answer then. Go."

"In the shrubbery—at seven. It will be dark," muttered the priest, hesitating.

“Coward ! What, are you afraid of me ? I will not harm you. Bring your revolver, to make all safe. I will give you my definite answer then. Now, out of the house, hound !”

With a savage smile, the priest left the room, muttering between his set teeth as he opened the door, “You shall use different words ere long, my fine gentleman !”

Tom did not hear him: he had fallen into a chair, and he buried his head in his hands.

* * * * *

I hope it has never chanced to any of my readers to know that state of utter misery which, when reached, turns to apathy, almost to pleasure. The way to it is bitter, but the agony of the awakening is unspeakable. It is a mental half-drowning: the first horror of suffocation: the knowledge that this end has come: the frantic efforts to



keep on the surface that the drowning man knows are vain, even while he makes them : the despair as he sinks, the pain of death, succeeded, we are told, by a pleasant lulling to rest—and then—the horror of the resuscitation, the agony of the awakening! We read of such things and we shudder ; but we hear little of agonies borne by the mind to which all this torture of the body is as nothing. What Tom Dillon felt in the short hour that intervened between the priest's leaving him and luncheon time cannot be described here. There are some things too deep for the novelist to portray, and strong feeling is above words—language is powerless to reproduce it. His faith in the priest having been so entirely dispelled, he now began to doubt the truth of his slanders of Kathleen, and the thought was hell to him. "Perhaps she loves me still—has loved me always?" he thought, "and I——" Ah! what a torturer the



mind can be, and it ceases not its questions of fire, even when we confess all.

Lord and Lady Rosemore and their daughters had arrived that day from England, on a lengthened stay, and her Ladyship had been all the morning confabulating with her "dear child," and had come to the conclusion that Tom was in a very unsatisfactory state; that his wife was very badly treated in being kept so quiet; and that a plan must be immediately arranged to wake him up. They had not begun badly, as they had brought with them a party from London, who, if silliness and noise could do it, would certainly wake him up with a vengeance.

As they sat down to lunch—

"Where is Tom?" asked Lady Rosemore.

"Oh, I don't know," said Lady Alice, with affected melancholy. "He doesn't always come to lunch; indeed, he never tells me what he is going to do."

"But he will surely come to-day," said Lady Rosemore, with becoming dignity. "He owes so much civility to *us*, I think."

"Oh, he is civil to no one but the priest," remarked the daughter, helping herself to an *entrée*.

"Ah," said the mother, drawing in her breath, with a low hissing sound, perhaps like that made by Coleridge's maiden, "that must be looked to. That priest holds a position in this house I should not allow, Alice, if I were you, for a moment."

They were seated together at the top of the lunch table, and under cover of the noise made by the others, were able to converse apart.

"It's all very well to say that, mamma; but Tom isn't *your* husband. I *have* spoken to him about the priest several times, but he has always said that he insisted on being allowed to have his friends, and I might

have mine. What could I say to that?"

"Say! a hundred things. A man's friends are very different to a woman's; and, besides, you don't want to make women friends?"

"No, indeed."

"Then why should he make men friends? Take my advice, my dear. It is better that he should flirt with twenty women than that he should be too intimate with one man. He is a great deal too intimate with this priest."

Lady Rosemore looked sternly at her daughter as she spoke, and the latter answered as if defending herself against some terrible charge.

"Indeed, mamma, I have done my best. I have always made myself as unpleasant as possible to him when he comes into the drawing-room; and I have always carefully avoided asking him here, or seconding Tom's invitations."

"Well, my dear, I shall take upon myself to speak to Tom on the subject, and have no doubt he will see the matter in the right light. Oh, here you are, Tom! We have been at lunch some time. Come and sit by me—between Alice and me—so. Quite a family group. Now begin your lunch, my dear Tom, and let me talk to you while you eat. Gracious! what a noise those children are making! Now, I'll begin. Go on eating. You are great friends with your parish priest, are you not?"

Tom paused for a moment before he answered.

"No; not particularly. But why?"

"Well, Alice tells me he is always in the house."

"Oh," said Tom, speaking half to his wife as well as to her mother, "Alice has been complaining? Well, she need not trouble herself about him much more. I do not think he will come quite so often now."

As Tom went on with his lunch, eating merely that he might not be expected to talk, and looked at his wife, who was not his wife, he felt as if he could hardly act his part any longer. Every time he spoke to Lady Alice or to her mother, he thought of what they might be rudely told that very evening, and he shuddered.

A little affection, a little care for him in his wife's eyes that day would have decided him, and he would have perjured himself to the priest to save her the fearful shock that awaited her. But she was as cold as ice to him, and took every opportunity of showing him that the coming of her mother and sister had made all the difference in her happiness, and that she had been miserable and dull while they had been alone together.

After lunch, too, Lady Rosemore took him to task in a very high and mighty manner for not having amused her dear

child sufficiently, and insisted that he must at once see about a house in London for next summer.

Tom refused point blank, and then the full vials of her Ladyship's wrath were let loose upon him. He was told that she — Lady Rosemore — had always been against what no one could deny was a *mésalliance*; but that for their child's happiness they had sacrificed her; that in common gratitude he should do all he was told to; and that he ought to be proud of a wife so far above him in social position, and not try to drag her down to his level. Whereupon Tom forgot everything, save that he was insulted, and told Lady Rosemore some very unpleasant and bitter truths; so that they parted in anger, and when he, some hours afterwards, entered his wife's room, he found her in tears, trying to console her mother for his insults, as she termed them, with her two sisters, cold, and refusing to



speak even a word to him—the guilty one.

“I am sorry I spoke so, Alice,” he said, humbly, laying a stress on her name, to show that he only addressed her, “but I was goaded.”

“I was prepared for some wretched excuse,” said Lady Alice, “but that my mother *goaded* you is, to my mind, only another insult.”

“My dear Alice,” said Tom, trying to touch her hand, the tears starting to his eyes as he looked on her he had unconsciously betrayed so cruelly, “you are angry now, but, believe me, the fault is not all on my side.”

“Of course not,” said Lady Rosemore, with a sneer.

“Will you come to my room in half an hour, Alice dear? I want to talk to you.”

There was a softness in his voice that his

wife had heard but seldom. She thought it was the first sign of his submission, and that her mother had done wonders already.

"No; I shall not come to your room, or speak with you on any subject, until you apologize to mamma."

"Lady Rosemore knows perfectly well," said Tom, haughtily, "that any apologies between us should begin, where the insults began, with her."

"Oh, let him go," cried the Countess, smelling her salts. "It is useless to argue with a man in such a mood."

"I am in no bad mood, God knows," said Tom, again addressing Alice, and his voice again softening; "and I ask you again, Alice, for the last time, will you come and let me say what I have to tell you? For the last time, will you?"

"You have heard what my daughter said," said Lady Rosemore. "That is your an-

swer. She requires you to apologize to her mother for——”

Tom never took his eyes off his wife, and said again, as if he had not heard the Countess—

“For the last time, will you? I speak to you, Alice.”

“I told you I should not,” answered Lady Alice, turning her back upon him. “Surely your priest is enough for you. And your refusing now to listen to mamma makes everything worse.”

“Oh, never mind me, my dear,” said Lady Rosemore, who began to be alarmed at the half-mournful, half-stern look she saw on Tom’s face.

“But I do mind you, mamma; and you shall never be insulted, if I can help it. Surely,” and she turned haughtily to Tom, who still lingered at the door, “you need not follow us here to insult us, although it *is* your house.”

Tom bit his lip, but still hesitated. "Once more, I ask you, Alice," he began.

"And once more, I answer no!" she replied, impatiently.

With a sigh he closed the door, and walked back to his room. He had almost made up his mind to tell her all before the priest could execute his threat, but this conduct on her part made it impossible. "Poor thing!" he thought, "would to God I could save her the shock! But how? But how?"

As he sat in his room, in which the shadows were darkening, and thought over the crisis now at hand, a horrid recollection grew into his mind that there was a pistol-case lying in a drawer, close—close to his hand. The pistol in it was always loaded—always loaded. What then? It was but a touch of the finger!

Unconsciously, as he mused he found the pistol in his hand, and started as he knew it was there. "Why not?" cried a voice

within him. "Why not? It is time to go. Life is death—death will be life to you!" The room seemed to be peopled with demons, shouting as they whirled through the dark shadows about his head. "It is time, coward! Why wait?" The very furniture seemed to grin at him in derision. "It is time, coward! Why linger on?" The wind, as it whistled mournfully down the chimney, shrieked "It is time!" The darkening sky seemed to shut out all his future. It was to end here.

"No, no!" he cried, starting up, pistol in hand. "'Coward!' yes, that is the word—would be the word if I ran away. No!" and he seemed to turn fiercely upon some opponent. "I am no coward. I will meet my destiny. If I cannot conquer it, I will at least meet it. Coward!" Muttering again this talismanic word, he put the pistol back in its box, locked it, and the danger was past.

It was no thought of Heaven, alas ! that saved him from this crime. It was only the casual recollection of a human term of opprobrium which drew him from its commission. He could be a self-murderer ; he could break God's solemn law, but he could not bear to think himself a coward !

As he walked down, at seven o'clock, to the shrubbery, past the drawing-room window, whence came the noise of a gallant company assembled, he had made up his mind, and no earthly power could have changed it. He found the priest standing in the narrow walk. It was so dark that he almost ran against him ere he perceived him, for the moon was hidden behind a bank of black clouds.

As he stepped off the path on to the grass to avoid the priest, he stumbled against some substance on the ground, and almost fell. Supposing it to be a tree, he raised

his foot over it, and stood beside the other in the path.

"I have come to give you my answer," said he, and Father Murphy read in his tone what the answer was.

"Do not give it rashly. I am ready to wait even another day if you are undecided," said he.

"I am *not* undecided, sir. But before I give you the answer, and before you make up your mind to execute your threat——"

"Your answer is 'No,' then?" interrupted the priest.

"It is."

"You will repent it," said the priest, angrily. "You will bitterly repent it. All Ireland shall know to-morrow that Mr. Dillon of Ballytobin has committed bigamy, and that Lady Alice is his harlot. All shall——"

"Peace, sir! I said I would not harm you, and I will not, unless you drive me to

it. Yes, I see your pistol ; but, if I chose, you should not have breath enough to use it. Put it up and hear me. Before we part, I wish to know a few things, which, as they concern myself, you will, perhaps, not object to tell me ?”

“ Ask them,” said the priest, still with a hand on his pistol, for Tom was close to him, and there was a strange ring of menace and desperation in his tone.

- “ I wish to know—and now you have thrown off the mask, and I know you for an enemy, you may tell me—whether my marriage with Kathleen was plotted for by you from the first ?”

“ I see no use in my answering these questions. You came out here to answer mine.”

“ No matter. I do see a reason for your answering me. The reason is, that *you shall !*”

“ I am not easily forced.”

“You are a coward, and I know it. I knew it when you first appeared in the cottage when I was with Kathleen. I saw you wince and turn pale when I made a step towards you then. You have much more reason to wince now. You are within grasping distance of a man you have rendered desperate. You are in danger, Mr. Murphy, unless you answer my questions.”

The priest attempted to draw his pistol from inside the breast pocket of his coat, but the lock caught for a moment, and gave Tom time to seize his arm before he could level it, and jerk it from him into the bushes.

In another instant the priest found two strong, nervous hands about his throat. He shrieked aloud in his terror.

“Silence!” exclaimed Tom, as calmly as if nothing had happened. “I will not harm you if you answer my questions quietly and truthfully ; but a lie, or a shriek, and I will

strangle you where you stand. Now, answer my question."

"I forget what it was, and I will answer nothing while your hand is on my throat."

"Take care what you say!" said Tom; "*will* is an awkward word. I am master here. However, this will be pleasanter for you, and equally safe," and he transferred his grasp to the collar of the priest's coat. "Now, was my marriage with Kathleen plotted for by you?"

"Yes," said the priest, with a sudden access of savageness; "yes, it was my plot to catch you, and you fell into it readily enough. I gave you Kathleen, though I loved her, and she loved me——"

"Liar!" exclaimed Tom, shaking him, in his rage. "Liar! she never loved but me, and I broke her heart—oh, God! What was your plan in making her my wife?" he asked, after a pause, during which his grasp of the priest's collar never relaxed.

"To turn you to the faith," said the priest, in a sullen voice.

"The end sanctified the means," and Tom laughed bitterly. "Then—and answer me truthfully as you value your wretched life—did you induce her to leave me?" he ground his teeth as he asked the question.

"No!" answered the other, moving uneasily under the iron hand upon his shoulder. "I tried to set her against your sister, to get your sister from the house, and I had succeeded, when some letter you wrote made her go, in despair. But she did not love you," and an indescribable malice came into his voice. "She did not love you; no! and you deserved to lose her."

"She did love me, liar! but I deserved well to lose her. Where did she go? what did she do when she left here? By Heaven, if you try to escape, I will strangle you!"

"Leave your hold!" cried the priest, for

Tom had twisted his collar in his excitement; "I am choking!"

"There!" said Tom, relaxing his grasp a little, "where did she go?"

"She went to Dublin, and was starving in the streets——"

"My God!" exclaimed Tom, with a groan.

"When she was found by a man, and taken care of."

"A man!—what man?" asked Tom, fiercely.

"An old man, who had been with the Fenians—with Macdermot, here; they call him the Philosopher."

"I know him," said Tom, with a sigh of relief, "go on."

"She has been with him ever since. I have had men watching her."

"Then," said Tom, and the words came slowly, and as if with pain, "what you told me of her falseness was a lie!—she is true!"

"She is. You only have been false. But——"

"What more? out with it, hound!" and Tom shook with the pent-up rage within him.

"She is dying—has been dying for months."

"By God!" cried Tom, springing upon the priest, and bearing him to the ground, "this is too much! My promise! D—n my promise; I did not know all your villany. You shall die—die!" and with all his strength, as he knelt upon the priest's body, he pressed his fingers into his throat.

The priest tried to cry out, but nothing but gurgling noises came, and his end was very near.

Tom still knelt upon him, repeating, as he grasped his throat with a clutch of iron, "Die! die! die!"

Just at this moment the moon rose over the clouds that had hidden her, and shone

out in all her majesty. Ah! many a ghastly deed she has to smile upon—many a fearful sight does she light up; but few more ghastly or more fearful than those two men she saw this night, the one white with fury, his veins standing out upon his face like cords; and the other choking—dying, his face a fearful blue-black as he writhed under the strong hands that were pressing his life out.

"Die! die!" repeated Tom, wildly; when he looked up, and suddenly darted across the path, leaving his murderous deed unaccomplished. There was *something* lying, half hidden by the bushes, on the grass. What was it? why did he clasp it in his arms so tenderly, and kiss it over and over again? What could this bundle, dripping and encrusted with half-thawed snow, be to him that he should leave his vengeance for it? Wildly he ran to the house, through the hall, and into the warm and brilliantly-

lit drawing-room where his wife and guests were preparing to go upstairs and dress for dinner. He met Lady Rosemore in the doorway, and brushed past her, the bundle still in his arms, without ceremony. The astonished company made room for him to pass as he walked across the room to the sofa, and laid that bundle tenderly down upon it; then, wheeling it nearer to the fire, leant over it as if unconscious that he was not alone. Lady Alice was playing Bésique with a smart young gentleman in the far corner of the room. The sudden hush caused her to look up, and, seeing the startled appearance of her guests, she walked across the room to the sofa, to where the bundle was.

“What is this?” she said, and her voice seemed to echo strangely round the room, at least, to Tom. “Who is this woman? Why do you bring her here?” There was no answer.

"Some poor creature fallen in the snow," said some one; "poor thing!"

Tom never spoke, but continued to lean over the sofa, his lips moving, but no words coming.

"Why do you bring her here?" said Lady Alice, angrily. "Take her to the servants' hall—that is her proper place."

"No!" said Tom, looking up, and no one in the room who saw him will ever forget the expression of his face. "No, this is her proper place. She is dying, and she is—my wife!"





CHAPTER XIV.

HOME, AT LAST.

IN a darkened room, one thin cold hand in her husband's, lay Kathleen Dillon for two days and nights, and death seemed to have decided — cruelly decided — that her eyes should never uncloset to witness the miserable remorse and anguish of mighty love that stirred the heart of him that sat and watched her.

No one but the doctors were allowed to come into that darkened room, and even at the doctors Tom looked with jealous eyes, as they bent over or touched his recovered darling. Recovered too late, he thought; and the fear maddened him.



At last a strange dead sleep took the place of the long fainting fit that had so alarmed them, and with a slightly lightened heart, scarce daring to breathe lest he should wake her from a slumber that might save her, Tom sat and thought of the past, and tried to think of what was to come. He wondered, while he gazed at the long dark lashes that he prayed might be raised again to open out a look of love—what had happened in the house since his announcement of what the ghastly burden was; whether the guests had gone—perhaps the Rosemores and Alice had gone too—and what had happened to the man he had left half-choking in the shrubbery. Tom had scarcely known what he was doing when he carried his wife into the drawing-room, and made that fatal announcement before all his guests. He scarcely remembered now what had happened, but had a hazy recollection of seeing several women collected round



Lady Alice as she lay fainting upon the floor, and of the others in the room shrinking, as with horror of him, to let him pass, as he carried his beloved burden upstairs. Kathleen lay in the room that had at first been hers; Lady Alice having chosen a larger one in another part of the house. Tom sat and watched, never leaving go of the little hand that seemed so small and transparent. The clock ticked on, and still she slept; but there was more colour in her cheek, and the first agony of fear was leaving his mind. She might live yet!

All at once the door opened, and a light step approached him.

"Don't come here," said Tom, in a whisper, but angrily. "I will have no one bothering here."

"Oh, let me in, Tom!" And Emily approached the bedside.

"Emily! you here? How did you hear——"



"I had found her in Dublin, and she left us suddenly. We have searched for her high and low, and never thought of coming here. Oh, Tom——"

"Hush!" said Tom, hastily. "Don't speak so loud—you'll wake her. Now tell me—in a whisper, mind—where are they all?"

"Your—your—Lady Alice is ill in bed. Her mother is with her. Every one else, except Lord Rosemore, is gone. He wants to see you," said Emily, briefly.

"I can't see him yet," said Tom, with a wearied gesture, putting one hand to his throbbing head. "I can see nobody—do nothing—till we know the worst, or best, here. Oh, my darling," and putting his head upon the counterpane, he burst into tears.

"Don't, Tom," whispered Emily, putting her hand upon his shoulder, "or you will make me do the same. Tell me—I have

seen no one except Doolan--what do the doctors say?"

"They do not *say* there is no hope, but I can see it in their faces."

"But doctors are always gloomy. It was a terrible journey for her to take, alone, so ill, but there still may be——"

"I must hope!" exclaimed Tom, almost savagely. And at this moment Kathleen moved.

Her first words were those usual to persons who have been unconscious.

"Where am I?"

"At home," said Tom, bending over her, his whole body shaking with excitement; for her waking up in her right mind was to be a good sign.

"At home," repeated Kathleen, vaguely. "Where's the Stoic?"

"It is I—Tom—your husband, who loves you."

"Oh, no," and Kathleen shuddered, "he

doesn't love me. He wants me dead, but I must see him once again. I cannot die till I have seen him. I must; let me get up, let me get——" She ceased suddenly, and recognised her husband. "Tom!"

In a moment his arms were round her, and her dark head nestled on his shoulder.

"Kathleen! forgive me!" he cried, and there was agony in his tone.

"You love me still?" murmured Kathleen, a bright spot of crimson flushing her cheeks.

"Love you, my darling? I have always loved you, my love, my love!" and the husband's tears mingled with the wife's over the pillow.

"You mustn't tire her, Tom," said Emily, gently, when Kathleen's sobs seemed to be exhausting her. "She ought to try and sleep again."

"Oh, no!" pleaded Kathleen, "I must hear him talk, it is so long since I have.

Oh, Tom!" And she tried to throw one of her poor weak arms about his neck, and failed.

"Emily is right," said Tom. "You must be quiet for a time; try and sleep, dearest." And with an effort he tore himself out of the room.

"Emily," he said, when they were outside the door, "I must not stay with her now. I cannot control myself sufficiently. You stay in the room, the doctor will be here in an hour. Send him to me in my room. I shall stay there till I may see her again, for I must think, or I shall go mad with joy."

"Oh, Tom," said Emily, pausing at the door, as she was re-entering, "you must not forget how ill she is."

"I *cannot* lose her now, Emily; I feel I cannot. Providence could not be so cruel."

Emily shook her head as she went into the sick room. She knew well that Kath-

leen's illness could not be stayed, and though she might shake off the fever that had laid hold of her now, her time must be short.

The bare idea of what she must have gone through to get to Ballytobin, from Dublin, in the state she was in, made Emily shudder. "Thank God!" she thought, "that she was ever able to speak to Tom again."

Kathleen's anxiety to see Tom, and to talk to him, was so great, that the doctors thought it best to humour her; and that night they were alone together.

I have not space nor power to recount the mutual confessions of that night. Kathleen spoke as one who knew she must soon die, but it was long before Tom could listen to her, whenever she so spoke, with anything like calmness.

"You must not die!" he cried, throwing his strong arms round her, as if to hold her back. "You have but just been restored to me. You shall not die!"

“And yet I have prayed for death, Tom. Ah, we never know what is good for us ; I would live now !”

“And you will, my darling ! you will !”

“No, Tom—no ; but don’t cry, for it hurts me so to see you. Oh ! Tom, my darling, if you only knew how I have longed to see you once more. How frightened I was, when I got up and dressed and ran out of the house in Dublin, that my strength would fail before I could get to the station, and then when the train started, I prayed to God to give me strength to reach here ; and I did, and looked in at the window, and saw a crowd of smart people—ladies and gentlemen, laughing and talking—but not you. Then I felt as if I should die, Tom—for the shutters were all shut ; there was no chance of my seeing you, and I felt that I could not hold out much longer, and then I waited in the shrubbery, and all at once I thought I saw Father Murphy com-

ing, and I recollect no more. Oh, Tom! if I had died there, without seeing you! but God is good—God is good! my love! my love!” and her hand played fondly with his hair as he knelt by her bedside.

“Oh, Kathleen!” cried he, in a hoarse voice, “why did you ever leave me? we might have been so happy!”

“They told me lies of you, Tom—horrible lies; and they said you did not love me—that I was kept here by your sister while you loved some one else; and I couldn’t bear it. I thought you would be happier without me, and so I went. I meant never to have let you know I lived still, Tom; but I couldn’t die without seeing you. Call me *mavourneen* again, Tom!”

“Oh, *mavourneen*! that I could have slighted such love as yours! But we were happy once, darling; we were happy at Grenald!”

“Yes—so happy! and we are happy now.”

"Happy! but you must live, mavourneen, you must live!"

"No, Tom! don't try and make me wish to so much. I was ready for death, but now, and with your love—— But tell me, darling, who is the Lady Alice I hear mentioned so often in whispers? Is she a friend of yours staying here—the tall, beautiful lady I saw at the window when I looked in that night?"

Tom hesitated for a moment, and his face was ghastly white——

"They told me you were dead, Kathleen. God help me! I believed too easily, and I—— oh! mavourneen! how can I tell you! ——I——"

"I know," interrupted Kathleen, putting her hand into his, and smiling a sickly smile. "You married."

"Oh, Kathleen!" cried Tom, in an agony of humiliation, "I thought you were dead. God knows, I only loved your memory. You are my only true wife!"

"But, Tom!" said Kathleen, a perplexed expression coming over her features, "she is your wife—you will not put her away for me?"

"She is not my wife," said he, pressing his hand upon the counterpane. "You are my wife, and you only!"

"But it is horrible, Tom ; oh, Tom ! when I am gone—and it will be soon, I feel—you must do all you can to make up to her for this cruel wrong. You will?"

"I cannot lose you!" cried Tom, "my own love!"

"Yes, darling, your own true love ; but you must promise me this. I cannot die happy else. You will do all you can to spare her shame?"

"Yes," said Tom, between his teeth, and as if in severe bodily pain. "I will marry her when you are dead. You are severe, darling."

"Severe!" said Kathleen, pressing her

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hot lips to his hand, "no, darling ; but I could not be happy if I thought my living had brought such grief upon another. And she is so handsome, and looks so proud ! Ah ! she was a better wife for you than I !"

It would weary the reader did I recount more of their conversation ; maybe, indeed, that I have already trespassed too much upon his patience. Soon after it, Tom had an interview with Lord Rosemore, who used hard words at first, but became less angry when he knew more of the facts. Tom did not think it necessary to tell him that he had known of Kathleen's existence before the day he found her in the shrubbery.

"Lord Rosemore," he said, as they were parting, having arranged that Lady Alice should be taken to Rosemore Castle directly she was well enough to be moved, a series of fainting fits having come upon her ; "Lord Rosemore, I ask your pardon for having, unintentionally, done you as great an injury,

through your daughter, as one man can do another. Lady Alice and Lady Rosemore I am not fit to see; will you tell them that—that my wife is dying, and that anything you may propose after that—” Tom gasped as he said the words—“after that will be cheerfully acceded to by me. All that can be done shall be done, I swear it. All I ask is, that you will wait—no one can say a word against your daughter—until—until——” His voice failed him, and he stood looking at Lord Rosemore without speaking.

The other took his hand, with almost equal emotion—

“Dillon, it is, as you say, a horrible blow for me, and for my poor daughter; but we must bear it as ladies and gentlemen can bear things. You are scarcely to blame, and, believe me, I sympathize with and pity you, from my heart!”

So saying, the old peer dashed his hand across his eyes, and hastily left the room.

Very few people would have believed him capable of so much feeling ; but most men have a soft side, though it be difficult to find.

Day by day Kathleen grew worse ; the fever had gone, but its effects remained, and left her but little strength to fight against her other enemy, consumption, which now claimed its prey.

She had asked to see the Stoic, and had told Tom of all his kindness to her.

“Sir !” said Tom, as they shook hands beside her bed, “you are my friend for as long as I live !”

There were tears in both men’s eyes when Kathleen put her little hand on their two, and smiled to see her husband and her benefactor friends.

At last, as the coming of autumn was beginning to make the earth loveable again, the end of all this waiting without hope came.

It was the dead of night. Tom was sitting in an arm-chair by Kathleen's bed, and opposite him his sister, worn out with watching, dozed in another chair. The Stoic sat in an uncomfortable attitude, his nose and knees touching one another, near the door, ever and anon stealing softly across the room to look at the sleeping girl. Each time that he looked, he pressed Tom's hand, but the other seemed so absorbed in his gloomy thoughts as not to notice it. The clock ticked on with that melancholy sound it has only in a sick room: to one in it, time was so soon to merge into eternity!

Kathleen still slept, and still Tom watched, and still the Stoic paid his visits to her bed to look, and to return to his corner.

The candle began to flicker as if it were about to expire, and Tom rose to light a new one. He felt the Stoic's hand upon his arm, and he heard him say—

“ Let it go out—let it go out. The other light is gone.”

He was right ; while they watched for the end, the end had come unawares.

The light fell from Tom’s hand, and they were in darkness. He put his lips to hers ; they were cold, so cold !

Emily slept on, and Tom lay with his face upon that of his dead love ; and thus in darkness they waited for the dawn.





CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

WHEN Kathleen's funeral, a strictly quiet one, was over, and Tom had heard those solemn words, "dust to dust," which, though we know them so well—too well—never lose their intense meaning, he went up to Dublin and met Lord Rosemore. It was decided that a marriage service between him and Lady Alice should be performed in an hotel there, and that they then should at once separate: she remaining with her family, who had determined to spend a year or more in Ireland, and he settling on her at once the jointure which would have been hers at his death. Tom wanted to give her more than this, but Lord Rosemore refused to accept more, saying that she would live

with him till he died, and that she then would be amply provided for. At the ceremony no word passed between Tom and the woman he had wronged so deeply. He would fain have asked her pardon, or at least asked her to try and think less angrily of him ; but he found no opportunity of speaking to her alone. Her mother, with a face of iron, was at her elbow all the time.

With a heavy heart Tom walked away from the hotel where the ceremony had been performed ; and as he crossed the road, a carriage in which the Rosemores were proceeding to the station, on their way to Rosemore, dashed past him. He looked up and met his wife's eyes. She turned pale, and her lip curled with scorn and hatred, but she made no sign. Lord Rosemore made a kind gesture of farewell, but Tom could see nothing but the stern face of the woman whose life he had ruined.

"Oh, God !" he groaned, as he hurried

on, "why am I doomed to bring a curse upon all around me? Verner, Kathleen, Alice, all through me—all through me!"

A voice seemed to say in his ears, as he walked on, "Unstable as water." And the words stayed in his mind all through his journey back to Ballytobin.

Arrived at home, he found the Stoic just about to leave.

"I am glad to be able to say good-bye to you," said he.

"But must you go?" asked Tom.

"Yes, I have much to do. I am going on an errand for your sister, but I will return in a few days. Good-bye."

"He has gone to the Criminal Lunatic Asylum," said Emily afterwards.

"Ah," said Tom; "poor Macdermot!"

When he returned he had but a sad tale to tell. There were no hopes of Macdermot's recovering his senses. He imagined himself continually in command of an army in Ireland, and became more violent every

day. His health, however, was failing, and there were hopes that his wretched life would not long be prolonged.

“Ah, Miss Dillon,” said the Stoic, when he had told all, “you knew him; but you could not have loved him as I did. He was truly noble---and this is the end!”

“I did love him,” said Emily, as she pressed the other’s hand. “I may say it now. I loved him as a woman can only love once!”

Soon after this the Stoic insisted on leaving Ballytobin, although Tom and his sister did all they could to persuade him to stay. Just before he went he seemed embarrassed and as if he had something on his mind which he found it difficult to say. At last with much hesitation—

“I have a favour to ask of you, Mr. Dillon. I——”

“What is there I would not give you? Ask.”

“It is only that I want some little re-

membrance of my little guest. She made the world so bright to me, Mr. Dillon. What I would ask for, is the shawl she wore when you found her. It was the same she wore upon the bridge that night," and he shuddered.

Tom went upstairs to get it; he had not been in *that* room since her death, and it seemed peopled with ghosts of remorse. He did not come down, and the Stoic followed, and found him on his knees before a little crayon drawing of her face, which had been done by some country artist. .

"Oh God!" he cried, as he knelt, "forgive me! and oh, Kathleen, intercede for me!"

The Stoic knelt down by his side.

"Let me pray with you," he said, humbly, "for she taught me to know that there is a God."

Smile not, reader, at these two men, praying together for the intercession of their dead loved one. It may sound theatrical,

but it was true and real, and methinks their prayers must have been heard.

* * * *

Alone together, as when this story opened, Tom and Emily lived a quiet life, a melancholy life, but one of hope—hope for the end !

To go about among his tenantry, and to try and alleviate their sorrows and distresses, was Tom's aim ; and there was not a man, woman, or child on the estate who did not bless the sad kindly smile and hearty greeting of the melancholy master of Ballytobin.

The religious feelings that came to him now, he was at first inclined to despise as only the effect of his deep sorrow ; but soon true religion asserted a holding mastery over him, and he became—as far as we human beings have the power to know — a thoroughly good man.

The memory of his lost love would have kept him pure, even had not his mind been

naturally of an order that prefers light to darkness.

Emily was a true friend to him, and she loved him as few sisters love.

Thus they waited together, patiently, for the time when they might rejoin those they loved ; when they might pass

“To where, beyond these voices, there is peace !”

* * * *

And now something must be said of the other characters who have appeared upon our canvas.

A few words will suffice.

The injuries the priest had received from Tom's hands in the shrubbery were not sufficiently serious to prevent his rising and going home. He remained in the county until he heard all that happened at Ballytobin, and he then obtained leave of absence, and soon after was moved to another part of Ireland, where he proceeds with his schemes and plots, and still dreams of some day see-

ing his church dominant in his native land. The *hope*, however, that has dangled before his mind's eye for so long, is growing fainter to his view ; every year that we live brushes away another cobwebby delusion. He does not blame himself at all for the ruin he worked in Dillon's home. He thinks he worked for the church alone, and he has forgotten his hatred to Dillon, and the wild love for Kathleen that occasioned it.

Lord Rafflewell never came back to his wife, but died in India of wounds received from a tiger. Her Ladyship was left the whole of his fortune, and has taken to doing good. She visits the London hospitals, but is always careful to inquire beforehand whether they are fashionable—that is, whether other ladies of rank visit them. Let us hope that the patients are gratified by her attentions.

Mr. Fenelly has grown so afraid of his literary wife that he can neither speak nor sit down in her presence. He has found himself too nervous for his office of Resident

Magistrate, and has resigned it; he has also given up his scheme for quieting Ireland in a month. It is rumoured in the county that he is locked into his room every night, as on the first opportunity he means to escape.

Mrs. Verner bestowed her hand and fortune upon the beautiful Captain Fotheringay; he spent the fortune in a year. The right horses *would* not win, and they are *very* poor. The Captain, however, wears smarter clothes and larger bouquets in his button-hole than ever. His wife, however, does not go out into society, as she has no gowns.

Lord Bubbersleigh is going to be married to a girl of seventeen, who has just been presented; the daughter of a Scotch duke. Everyone in society is delighted, it is such a "charming marriage." Lord Bubbersleigh has as yet managed to appear sober before his intended; has broken up a little establishment at St. John's Wood, and gives the lady of his choice magnificent presents. It is, indeed, charming!



And Lady Alice? She has had her revenge on society for her woes ; for her acerbity of temper makes her wretched parents' home a hell to them, and all who know her shrink from her biting tongue. Pity for her is repelled by her manner, and Lord and Lady Rosemore shudder as they think that they must bear the infliction for their natural lives.

What became of Larry O'Feelan I never have heard.

And now there is no more to tell. I, the writer of the two last books of this tale, have purposely kept myself out of sight, as I had nothing to do with the occurrences. I made Tom Dillon's acquaintance soon after his first marriage, and I have loved him through all—loved him perhaps best when I could least respect him or approve his actions. For such is human nature !

THE END.







